

The Ministry of Jeremiah



From the 13th year of Josiah until after Nebuchadnezzar had taken Jerusalem, 40 years later, Jeremiah of Anathoth issued his warnings, orally and in writing, in the hope that the last kings of Judah would humbly surrender to God's leadership. Their refusal to listen doomed the nation, and the flower of Judah would be taken to Babylon.

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The Closing Years of Judah's History and Beginning of the Captivity, seventh-sixth century B.C.

Palestine in Biblical Times

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¹Nichol, F. D. (1978). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary : The Holy Bible with exegetical and expository comment*. Commentary Reference Series (Ge 1:1). Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association.

²Nichol, F. D. (1978). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary : The Holy Bible with exegetical and expository comment*. Commentary Reference Series (Je 1:1). Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association.

Jeremiah,” which is similar to the introductory phrases commonly used in other prophetic books of the OT (see Eze. 1:3; Hosea 1:1; Joel 1:1; etc.).

2. Authorship.—Jeremiah was the author of at least the major portion of the book. The actual writing was done by his trusted secretary, Baruch, the son of Neriah (see ch. 36:4, 27, 28, 32). Baruch may also have collected, edited, and preserved the material in the book, and may possibly have contributed to the biographical narratives it contains. His position as “the scribe” and secretary of Jeremiah implies that Baruch was well educated. According to Josephus (*Antiquities* x. 9. 1), Baruch came from a distinguished family in Judah. It appears that his brother was Zedekiah’s quartermaster, who went with the king to Babylon (see on Jer. 51:59). His high character and influence are shown by the fact that the remnant who wished to flee to Egypt charged Baruch with influencing the prophet against them (see ch. 43:3), also by the fact that some spurious writings were later issued under his name. One of these, the book of Baruch, is found in the Apocrypha. Ever loyal to Jeremiah, he went with him to the land of Egypt when the prophet was forced to accompany the remnant of Judah to that land (see ch. 43:5–7).

The closing chapter of the book (ch. 52) consists of a historical summary—not a prophecy—that extends to a time far beyond the known ministry of Jeremiah, and that was probably written by a later hand. Whoever the writer may have been, he was careful to make it clear that this chapter was not the work of the prophet Jeremiah. Before adding this historical appendix he wrote, “Thus far are the words of Jeremiah” (ch. 51:64).

The book of Jeremiah itself contains an account of how the first two editions of this prophecy were written (see ch. 36). For more than a score of years Jeremiah had been seeking to persuade the people of Judah to turn to God with real heart religion. In the fourth year of Jehoiakim (604 B.C.) he was commanded by God to put the main substance of his preaching into writing so that it could be read publicly by his secretary (ch. 36:1, 2). In response to this command, Jeremiah dictated to Baruch the words of the first edition on a roll of parchment (ch. 36:1–4, 17, 18; PK 432). Baruch was then given the dangerous task of reading these words to the people in the Temple on a fast day (ch. 36:5–8).

Later, when one of Jehoiakim’s officers, Jehudi, read the scroll to the king, Jehoiakim angrily snatched it, cut it with a penknife, and threw it into the fire (ch. 36:20–23). This made necessary the rewriting of the earlier messages (see ch. 36:27, 28, 32). Again, Baruch wrote the words at the dictation of Jeremiah. This second copy was a new and larger edition, containing not only the former messages, but additional messages as well (see ch. 36:32).

The book of Jeremiah strikingly reveals the rich personality of its author. His exquisitely sensitive nature is reflected in a number of passages which have been called his “confessions” (chs. 11:18–23; 12:1–5; 15:10–18; 17:14–18; 18:18–23; 20:7–18; cf. chs. 1:4–10; 6:11; 8:21 to 9:1). These passages give us a spiritual autobiography of this man of God. Jeremiah was naturally shy and retiring, and frequently struggled with great inner conflicts. But through divine power he developed a spiritual courage that made him a mighty hero for God.

In addition to this group of deeply personal passages the book of Jeremiah contains a series of biographical and historical narratives. More can be known of the life and ministry of Jeremiah than of the life and ministry of the writers of the other prophetic books. In fact one scholar, A. B. Davidson, has affirmed that this book “does not so much

teach religious truths as present a religious personality” (Hastings, *Dictionary of the Bible*, vol. 2, p. 576).

Jeremiah lived at Anathoth (chs. 1:1; 29:27), the modern *Râs el-Kharrûbeh*, about 21/2 mi. (4 km.) northeast of Jerusalem. He was of priestly descent (ch. 1:1). His father was Hilkiah, who is doubtless to be distinguished from the high priest of that name who discovered the book of the law (see 2 Kings 22:8). Jeremiah’s father is designated as “of the priests” and not “*the* priest” or “*the* high priest.” The fact that Jeremiah lived at Anathoth implies that he was probably a descendant of Eli and belonged to the line of Abiathar, whom Solomon deposed from the high priesthood (see on 1 Kings 2:26, 27).

Jeremiah’s call to the prophetic office came in 627/626 B.C., the 13th year of Josiah’s reign (ch. 1:2; see pp. 18, 19; also Vol. II, p. 77). Soon thereafter God bade the prophet to preach in Jerusalem (ch. 2:2). He did not confine his ministry to Jerusalem, but conducted a preaching tour through the cities of Judah (ch. 11:6; PK 428). Upon his return to Anathoth his fellow townsmen formed a plot to take his life (ch. 11:18–23). To escape these persecutions he seems to have transferred his residence to Jerusalem. Here another attempt was made on his life. His bold prediction in the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim, son of Josiah, that the Temple would become like Shiloh, angered the priests, false prophets, and people in Jerusalem, and they demanded that Jeremiah be put to death (ch. 26:6–11). However, the princes arose to his defense (ch. 26:16).

Later, when Nebuchadnezzar’s army withdrew from the final siege of Jerusalem for a time to meet the threat posed by the approach of the king of Egypt, Jeremiah was arrested when he attempted to go to Anathoth (ch. 37:11–15). The prophet was accused of deserting to the Chaldeans and was again beaten and imprisoned. In fact he nearly lost his life in the miry dungeon of Malchiah (see ch. 38:6), but was rescued by Ebed-melech the Ethiopian (see ch. 38:7–13). However, Zedekiah apparently kept him in prison, where he remained until Jerusalem fell (ch. 38:14–28).

After the desolation of Jerusalem, Nebuchadnezzar gave the prophet his freedom and allowed him the choice of remaining in Palestine or accompanying the captives to Babylon (see ch. 40:1–5). Jeremiah chose to remain with the remnant in Palestine, under their newly appointed governor, Gedaliah (ch. 40:6). After the murder of Gedaliah a remnant of the Jews under Johanan fled to Egypt, contrary to Jeremiah’s advice, and took the prophet with them (chs. 42; 43). There at Tahpanhes, Jeremiah predicted the invasion of Egypt by Nebuchadnezzar (ch. 43:8–13), and gave his last message of warning to the Jews who had fled there (ch. 44). It was apparently in this foreign land that the career of the great prophet came to an end.

A brief note on the differences between the text of the LXX and that of the Hebrew is in order. One striking difference is in the arrangement of the prophecies dealing with foreign nations. In the Hebrew text these prophecies are found in chs. 46 to 51, but in the LXX they are found in chs. 25:14 to 31:44. There is also a difference in the order of dealing with the various nations. In the Hebrew the order is: Egypt, Philistia, Moab, Ammon, Edom, Damascus, Kedar and Hazor, Elam, and Babylon; in the LXX the order is: Elam, Egypt, Babylon, Philistia, Edom, Ammon, Kedar and Hazor, Damascus, and Moab.

There are also variations in text. It has been estimated that the LXX is approximately 1/8, or about 2,700 words, shorter than the Hebrew. The LXX generally does not employ the phrase “saith the Lord” when it is used parenthetically, and such titles as “the

prophet” after Jeremiah’s name, and “the king” after the name of the ruling monarch. In the main, the same is true of such divine titles as “the God of Israel” or “the God of hosts.”

Certain whole sections consisting of several verses also do not appear. The following are the most noteworthy of these: ch. 8:10b–13a; ch. 10:6–10; ch. 17:1–5a; (ch. 34 in LXX) ch. 27:1, 7, 13, 21; (ch. 36 in LXX) ch. 29:16–20; (ch. 40 in LXX) ch. 33:14–26; (ch. 46 in LXX) ch. 39:4–13; (ch. 31 in LXX) ch. 48:45–47; (ch. 28 in LXX) ch. 51:44c–49a; and ch. 52:27b–30. Besides these there are minor variations having to do mainly with phrases and single words.

To explain these textual variations some scholars have resorted to the theory of a double recension of the book of Jeremiah. They suppose that one of these was produced in Palestine, and the other in Egypt. Others think that the translator of the LXX deliberately shortened the text by omitting repetitions, simplifying the style, and abbreviating difficult readings. It is thought by conservative scholars that there may be some truth in this second theory. For example, that the omission of ch. 8:10b–12 in the LXX may be due to its similarity to ch. 6:12–15. Again, it is held that the omission of one or two passages may be due simply to the error of the eye in skipping from one line to another with a similar ending and thus leaving out the intervening material, an omission called homoeoteleuton.

The variations discussed above, although more extensive than in the other books of the OT, do not substantially affect the basic theme or pattern of the book. It may be that a careful study of some of the Dead Sea scrolls (see pp. 86–88; Vol. I, pp. 31, 32) will throw further light on the text of Jeremiah.

3. Historical Setting.—During the early days of Jeremiah’s ministry three great powers, Assyria, Egypt, and Babylon, were struggling for supremacy. Under Ashurbanipal (669–627? B.C.) Assyria had reached its peak, and was now on the decline (see Vol. II, pp. 65, 66). Egypt had thrown off the Assyrian yoke and was endeavoring to regain its former dominance in Near Eastern affairs (see Vol. II, pp. 89–92). With Nabopolassar’s accession to the throne of Babylon in 626 B.C., the rise to power of the Neo-Babylonian Empire began. The fate of Assyria was sealed by the fall of Nineveh (612 B.C.), and the new Babylonian Empire became the dominant power in Western Asia. Under Necho II, Egypt challenged the sudden rise of Babylon to power. Nebuchadnezzar II, Nabopolassar’s son, successfully met that challenge at the battle of Carchemish, 605 B.C., and Babylon replaced Assyria as a world empire (see pp. 505, 506; Vol. II, pp. 93, 94).

Jeremiah, during the last 40 years of Judah’s existence as a kingdom, bore messages of reform and revival to five kings: Josiah, Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, and Zedekiah. A brief summary of each reign follows:

a. Josiah (640–609 B.C.). After more than a half century of moral and spiritual deterioration under Manasseh (see 2 Kings 21:1–18; 2 Chron. 33:1–20) and Amon (see 2 Kings 21:19–25; 2 Chron. 33:21–25), Judah had once again a king noted for his piety and religious zeal for God. Josiah was only eight years of age when he began to reign (2 Kings 22:1). When he was only about 20 years of age, he introduced a number of reforms, abolishing first the high places of idol worship (see 2 Chron. 34:3). He was aided in his work by Jeremiah, who received his call to public ministry in the king’s 13th year. Josiah aimed to rid the land of idolatry by force and to re-establish the worship of

God (2 Chron. 34). In connection with the cleansing and repairing of the Temple in the 18th year of Josiah's reign, a copy of "the book of the law" was discovered (2 Kings 22:3–20). The discovery led to an intensification of Josiah's reform movement throughout the land. This reform was even extended to former territory of the northern kingdom (2 Kings 23:15–20; 2 Chron. 34:6, 7), the decline of the Assyrian Empire making such an extension possible.

King Josiah met an untimely death as a result of his presumptuous interference with Necho II of Egypt at Megiddo, 609 B.C. (see p. 505; also Vol. II, pp. 94, 95; 2 Kings 23:29, 30; 2 Chron. 35:20–24). His death was a real loss to the nation and he was deeply mourned by the people of Judah (2 Chron. 35:24, 25).

b. Jehoahaz (609 B.C.). Also known as Shallum (see on 1 Chron. 3:15). After Josiah died the people of the land placed Jehoahaz on the throne, presumably because of his pro-Babylonian sympathies (see on 2 Kings 23:30; 2 Chron. 36:1). After Jehoahaz had reigned only three months Necho II, evidently returning from his campaign to the north, deposed him and carried him to Egypt, where he died (see 2 Kings 23:31–34; Jer. 22:10–12).

c. Jehoiakim (609–598 B.C.). Earlier called Eliakim (2 Kings 23:34). After deposing Jehoahaz, Necho II placed Jehoiakim, second son of Josiah (see on 1 Chron. 3:15), on the throne (2 Kings 23:34). Judah was now under Egyptian suzerainty and paid a heavy tribute for Egyptian friendship (see on 2 Kings 23:35). In 605 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar invaded Palestine, took part of the Temple vessels, and deported some of the royal family and nobility to Babylon. Among these captives were Daniel and his three companions (see Dan. 1:1–6; Vol. II, p. 95). Jehoiakim was thus forced to switch his allegiance from Egypt to Babylon. At that time (see pp. 505, 506), in the battle of Carchemish, Egypt was severely beaten, and Necho II made a hasty retreat to Egypt with the remnant of his army. In spite of solemn assurances of fidelity to Babylon (see 2 Kings 24:1), Jehoiakim, who was pro-Egyptian at heart, openly rebelled in 598 B.C. This led to the second invasion of Judah and the capture and death of Jehoiakim. The king seems to have met a tragic end (see on 2 Kings 24:5).

d. Jehoiachin (598–597 B.C.). Also called Coniah (Jer. 22:24) and Jeconiah (1 Chron. 3:16; Jer. 24:1). After a brief reign of some three months this son and successor of Jehoiakim surrendered to the besieging Babylonians and was deported to Babylon with his mother, wives, sons, and palace officials (see 2 Kings 24:10–16). Ten thousand captives were taken to Babylon in this second deportation, which included the chief men and the craftsmen of the city. The prophet Ezekiel was among these captives (see Eze. 1:1–3). For the light thrown by archeology on this captivity see pp. 575, 756; (Vol. II, pp. 96, 97, 99).

During at least a part of the time, Jehoiachin was kept in prison, from which, in the 37th year of his exile, he was freed by Nebuchadnezzar's successor, Amel-Marduk, the Biblical Evil-Merodach (2 Kings 25:27–30).

e. Zedekiah (597–586 B.C.). Earlier called Mattaniah (2 Kings 24:17). After deporting Jehoiachin, Nebuchadnezzar made this 21-year-old son of Josiah puppet king over Judah. Zedekiah faced a difficult task. The upper classes of Judah had been deported and the people who were left behind were hard to manage. Jeremiah compared them to bad figs unfit for food (Jer. 24:8–10). To add to the difficulty of the situation, ambassadors from Edom, Moab, Ammon, Tyre, and Sidon were in Jerusalem (see Jer.

27:3) presumably for the purpose of inciting Zedekiah to join them in revolt against Babylon. Jeremiah warned Judah against their intrigue, and admonished not only Judah but these nations as well to submit to the yoke of Babylon (see Jer. 27; 28:14). He warned that the failure of Judah to submit would result in the utter ruin of Jerusalem. But contrary to all this instruction, Zedekiah revolted (see Vol. II, p. 97).

Nebuchadnezzar acted swiftly and terribly to crush the revolt. His invasion filled Zedekiah and all Jerusalem with apprehension and terror (Jer. 21:1–10). In a desperate attempt to gain the favor of God, the king and people joined in a solemn covenant with Him promising to free all Hebrew slaves in Jerusalem (ch. 34:8–10). But when Nebuchadnezzar temporarily lifted the siege because of the threat of Pharaoh's army (ch. 37:5), the covenant was forgotten and the freed men were cruelly re-enslaved (ch. 34:11–22). Jeremiah was seized and imprisoned as a traitor (ch. 37:11–15). Soon, however, the siege was resumed. The Jews fought desperately to save the city and themselves from the fate that threatened them. The city held out for 30 months (see Vol. II, p. 98; Vol. III, p. 92). But in July, 586 B.C., the Babylonians made a breach in the walls. With a small bodyguard Zedekiah managed to escape, but he was overtaken and captured near Jericho (see ch. 39:2–5). Jerusalem was sacked and burned (ch. 39:8), and nearly all of the remaining Jews taken into captivity (ch. 39:9, 10).

f. *Gedaliah*. Nebuchadnezzar appointed Gedaliah the son of Ahikam and the grandson of Shaphan (Jer. 26:24) to govern the remnant left behind (2 Kings 25:22). Gedaliah made his headquarters at Mizpah, near Jerusalem. The Babylonians granted Jeremiah his freedom, and he joined the new governor at Mizpah (Jer. 40:1–6). After the murder of Gedaliah (Jer. 41) a remnant of the Jews under Johanan fled to Egypt, compelling Jeremiah to go with them (Jer. 43).

Tentative Chronological Table of the Prophecies of Jeremiah

<i>Chapters</i>	<i>Dates</i>	<i>See on</i>	<i>Chapters</i>	<i>Dates</i>	<i>See on</i>
1	627		ch. 1:2	30	c. 596 ch. 30:2
2-6	627/26–c. 616		ch. 2:1;	31	c. 596 ch. 31:1
			PK 409, 410	32	588/87 ch. 32:1
7-11	609–c. 605		ch. 7:1	33	c. 587 ch. 33:1
12	600(?)		ch. 12:1	34	c. 588/87 ch. 34:1
13	c. 597		ch. 13:1, 18	35	c. 605 ch. 35:1, 11
14	627/26–c. 616		chs. 2:1; 14:1	36:1-4	605/04 ch. 36:1
15	627/26–c. 616		chs. 2:1; 15:1	36:5-32	604 ch. 36:9
16	627/26–c. 616		chs. 2:1; 16:2	37	c. 587 ch. 37:4
17	609(?)			38	c. 587/86 ch. 38:6
18	605/04(?)		ch. 18:1	39	588-586 ch. 39:1, 2
19	605/04		ch. 19:1	40	586 ch. 40:1
20	605/04		ch. 20:1		(cf. ch. 39:2, 9)
21	588/87		ch. 21:1	41	586 ch. 41:1;
22:1-19	605/04		ch. 22:1, 10, 18		PK 460
22:20-30	597		ch. 22:20, 24	42	c. 586 ch. 41:1
23	597(?)		ch. 23:1	43	c. 586 ch. 41:1

24	c. 597	ch. 24:1	44	c. 586–c. 576(?)	ch. 44:1
25	605/04	ch. 25:1	45	604	ch. 45:1
26	609–605	ch. 26:1	46–51	(605/04–594/93)	chs. 46:2; 47:1; 49:34; 51:59
27	594/93	ch. 27:1 (cf. ch. 28:1	52	597–561	ch. 52:1, 31; Vol. III, pp. 92, 93
28	593	ch. 28:1			
29	c. 596	ch. 29:1			

A sequential reading of the book of Jeremiah based on this tentative chronology would be arranged as follows:

Josiah (640–609): chs. 1–6; 14–16.

Jehoiakim (609–598): chs. 17; 7–11; 26; 35; 22:1–19; 25; 18–20; 36:1–4; 45; 36:5–32; 12.

Jehoiachin (598–597): chs. 22:20–30; 13; 23.

Zedekiah (597–586): chs. 24; 29–31; 46–51 (?); 27; 28; 21; 34; 32; 33; 37–39.

After the fall of Jerusalem: chs. 40–44; 52.

4. Theme.—The book of Jeremiah is made up of a series of prophetic sermons combined with historical and biographical data concerning the last days of the kingdom of Judah. By every means at his command Jeremiah sought to halt Judah's rapid descent down the declivity of moral depravity to ruin. But his efforts for the nation were largely fruitless. His calls to repentance fell on deaf ears.

Jeremiah was the prophet of heart religion. His messages were a call away from that which is external and superficial to that which is inward and real. He taught that corruption has its source in a wicked heart (ch. 17:9) and that without a new heart, new intentions, and a new spirit, man is incapable of goodness (ch. 13:23). Such a change, he emphasized, could be wrought only by the creative act of God (chs. 24:7; 31:31–34).

Like other prophets, Jeremiah warned against entangling foreign alliances (ch. 2:36). He admonished Judah to submit to the Babylonian yoke and warned that revolt would bring the nation to ruin.

Beyond the inevitable doom of the present the prophet envisioned a glorious future for those "who should prove true" to the Lord (PK 464). There would be a return for both houses of Israel; they were to be reunited as one people (PK 474). They would again be God's people and He would be their God (Jer. 32:37–41). If Israel would heed the messages of reform, the nation would be reconstituted under a new covenant (ch. 31:31–34). A righteous Branch from the stock of David would be their king (ch. 33:14–17).

5. Outline.

- I. The Prophet's Call and Commission, 1:1–19.
 - A. Identity of the prophet, 1:1–3.
 - B. The call of Jeremiah, 1:4–6.
 - C. The investment with authority, 1:7–10.
 - D. The vision of the almond branch, 1:11, 12.
 - E. The vision of the boiling caldron, 1:13–16.
 - F. The prophet's commission, with promises of protection, 1:17–19.
- II. Prophecies Concerning Judah and Jerusalem, 2:1 to 35:19.
 - A. A description and denunciation of the evil in Judah, 2:1–37.

1. Judah's ingratitude and unfaithfulness in return for God's love, 2:1–13.
2. Judah's sin and obstinacy under punishment, 2:14–28.
3. Judah's disregard of God's past corrections, 2:29–37.
- B. The call to the faithless people of Israel to return, 3:1 to 4:4.
 1. Her shameful unfaithfulness and forfeited privileges, 3:1–5.
 2. Judah's guilt exceeds that of the ten tribes, 3:6–11.
 3. A renewed call to both houses of Israel to repent, with promises of reunion and restoration, 3:12–20.
 4. A prayer of confession for Israel, 3:21–25.
 5. The demand for true heart conversion, 4:1–4.
- C. Judgment by an invading nation, 4:5 to 6:30.
 1. A description of the approaching danger, 4:5–31.
 2. Causes of the impending judgments, 5:1–31.
 - a. The universal lack of integrity making judgment inevitable and pardon impossible, 5:1–9.
 - b. Unbelief in the prophetic messages and false trust in fortified cities, 5:10–19.
 - c. Obstinacy, deceitfulness, and flagrant disobedience, 5:20–31.
 3. A description of the doom and its causes, 6:1–30.
- D. The Temple discourse, 7:1 to 10:25.
 1. Denunciation of Judah's shameless idolatry and pollution of the Temple, 7:1 to 8:3.
 2. Announcement of fearful punishment because of the people's impudent wickedness, 8:4–22.
 3. Lamentation over the people's treachery and deceit and the resulting calamities, 9:1–26.
 4. The folly of idolatry, 10:1–16.
 5. The invasion of Judah and the exile of its inhabitants, 10:17–22.
 6. Jeremiah's plea for moderation in punishment, 10:23–25.
- E. Preaching the covenant, 11:1 to 13:27.
 1. The broken covenant, 11:1–17.
 2. Reactions to Jeremiah's preaching, 11:18 to 12:6.
 - a. The plot of the men of Anathoth against him, 11:18–23.
 - b. The plot in the prophet's own family, 12:1–6.
 3. Punishment and redemption, 12:7–17.
 4. Reproof of pride in Judah, the chosen people, 13:1–27.
 - a. The symbolic action with the girdle and the interpretation, 13:1–11.
 - b. A symbolic utterance concerning wine flagons and the interpretation, 13:12–17.
 - c. A message to the king and queen mother, 13:18, 19.
 - d. A lamentation for the calamity coming upon Jerusalem, 13:20–27.
- F. Personal experiences of the prophet, 14:1 to 16:9.
 1. The drought; Jeremiah's intercession denied, 14:1 to 15:9.
 2. Jeremiah's inner conflict, 15:10–21.
 3. Jeremiah forbidden to marry or to participate in mourning and festal assemblies, 16:1–9.
- G. The causes of Judah's calamities and messages of comfort, 16:10 to 17:18.
- H. Exhortation regarding the observance of the Sabbath, 17:19–27.
- I. Symbols of the destruction of the nation, 18:1 to 19:13.
 1. The potter's vessel, 18:1–23.
 2. The broken potter's vessel, 19:1–13.
- J. Jeremiah persecuted, 19:14 to 20:18.

1. Jeremiah beaten and placed in the stocks by Pashur, 19:14 to 20:6.
2. Jeremiah's inner conflict, 20:7–18.
- K. Denunciation of Judah's civil and spiritual leaders, 21:1 to 24:10.
 1. Zedekiah's appeal to Jeremiah and the prophet's announcement of the capture of Jerusalem, 21:1–14.
 2. An appeal to the royal house, 22:1–9.
 3. Judgments upon the royal house, 22:10 to 23:8.
 - a. The fate of Jehoahaz, 22:10–12.
 - b. The sinful conduct and the fate of Jehoiakim, 22:13–19.
 - c. The effect of the loss of her kings upon Judah, 22:20–23.
 - d. The fate of Jehoiachin, 22:24–30.
 - e. Promises of Israel's restoration, 23:1–8.
 4. Denunciation of the false prophets, 23:9–40.
 5. The vision of two baskets of figs and its interpretation, 24:1–10.
- L. The announcement of judgment, 25:1–38.
 1. Judgment on Judah; the seventy years of exile, 25:1–14.
 2. Judgment on all nations, 25:15–38.
- M. Conflicts with professed prophets, 26:1 to 29:32.
 1. Conflict regarding the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple, 26:1–24.
 - a. Prediction of the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Temple, 26:1–6.
 - b. The demand for Jeremiah's death and his defense, 26:7–15.
 - c. The princes' and elders' defense of Jeremiah, 26:16–24.
 2. Conflict regarding the yoke of Babylon, 27:1 to 28:17>28:17.
 - a. Warning to the nations not to revolt against Babylon, 27:1–11.
 - b. Counsel to Zedekiah to submit to Babylon's yoke, 27:12–22.
 - c. The conflict with Hananiah, 28:1–17.
 3. Conflict with the false prophets in Babylon 29:1–32.
 - a. Jeremiah's letter to the exiles, 29:1–23.
 - b. A message against the false prophet Shemaiah, 29:24–32.
- N. Prophecies of restoration, 30:1 to 33:26.
 1. The deliverance and restoration of Israel, 30:1–24.
 2. The restoration and reunion of both houses under a new covenant, 31:1–40.
 - a. Israel's share in the coming restoration, 31:1–22.
 - b. Judah's share in the coming restoration, 31:23–26.
 - c. The new covenant made with both houses, 31:27–40.
 3. The purchase of the field and its significance, 32:1–44.
 4. Promises of a glorious future for Israel, 33:1–26.
 - a. Renewed promises of the elevation of Jerusalem to a place of honor among the nations, 33:1–13.
 - b. Promises of the re-establishment of the kingly and priestly office, 33:14–26.
- O. The infidelity and punishment of Judah, 34:1 to 35:19.
 1. Prediction of the fate of Jerusalem and Zedekiah, 34:1–7.
 2. A denunciation of Judah's breach of faith in re-enslaving freed men, 34:8–22.
 3. A lesson from the fidelity of the Rechabites, 35:1–19.
- III. Biographical and Historical Narratives, 36:1 to 45:5.
 - A. Events preceding the desolation of Jerusalem, 36:1 to 39:18.

1. The writing of Jeremiah's prophecies, 36:1–32.
 - a. The dictation of the first edition to Baruch, 36:1–8.
 - b. The reading of the scroll in the Temple courts by Baruch, 36:9–19.
 - c. The burning of the scroll by Jehoiakim, 36:20–26.
 - d. The production of the new scroll, 36:27–32.
2. The imprisonment of Jeremiah, 37:1 to 38:28.
 - a. The temporary lifting of the final siege, 37:1–5.
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CHAPTER 1

- 1 *The time, 3 and the calling of Jeremiah.* 11 *His prophetic visions of an almond rod and a seething pot.* 15 *His heavy message against Judah.* 17 *God encourageth him with his promise of assistance.*

1. The words of Jeremiah. A more common introduction to prophetic books is “the word of the Lord came,” etc. (Eze. 1:3; Hosea 1:1; Joel 1:1; etc.). The LXX begins with the phrase “the word of God which came to Jeremiah.” Certain Jewish commentators suggest that the shorter Hebrew introduction was used because the book not only presents prophecies but also contains material concerning the personal life of Jeremiah (see Amos 1:1).

Hilkiah. Probably not the high priest by that name who figured prominently in the discovery of “the book of the law” (2 Kings 22:8). The fact that the father of Jeremiah was from Anathoth probably identifies him as belonging to descendants of Abiathar, who was deposed from the priesthood at the time of Solomon (1 Kings 2:26, 27, 35).

Of the priests. Jeremiah was a priest by birth and a prophet by a special divine call, as were some of the other prophets (see Eze. 1:3; Zech. 1:1; cf. p. 1085).

Anathoth. One of the four cities in Benjamin assigned to the descendants of Aaron (see Joshua 21:17, 18), about 21/2 mi. (4 km.) northeast of Jerusalem, immediately beyond the Mt. of Olives.

2. Thirteenth year. That is, 628/27 B.C., assuming that Jeremiah reckoned years from the fall; it was 627/26 if he reckoned from the spring, as some hold (see Vol. III, p. 93, note 7). Either date is computed from Josiah's death in 609 (see p. 505).

3. Eleventh year. That is, 586 B.C. (see Vol. II, pp. 97, 98). The final captivity began in the fifth Jewish month of that year. Since the prophetic ministry of Jeremiah continued beyond this point (see p. 19), it lasted more than 40 years.

4. Came unto me. The first chapter is evidently designed as the author's introduction to the whole book. In it Jeremiah presents, at the very outset, his credentials as a prophet of God. This vocation was his, not by human choice, but by virtue of a direct commission from God. The deep sense of the divine call was the driving force of his ministry and his support and stay in moments of discouragement.

5. Before I formed thee. Even before Jeremiah was born it had been purposed that he should fill the prophetic office. To every individual God has assigned a place of duty and responsibility in His great plan (see PK 536; COL 326, 327).

Sanctified. Heb. *qadash*, which, in the form here found, may be translated “declared as sacred [or, dedicated]” (see on Gen. 2:3). God set Jeremiah apart for a special use. He separated him for his peculiar prophetic work.

Ordained. Heb. *nathan*, “to give,” here used in the sense “to appoint.” A similar prenatal choice was made of John the Baptist (Luke 1:15). Jeremiah might have refused to comply with the divine call. All men are endowed at birth with certain possibilities, but it is their responsibility to develop these possibilities to the full. Likewise God has a plan for every life today. “The specific place appointed us in life is determined by our capabilities” (Ed 267). We should discover what this place is and seek to carry out God’s purpose and plan for us.

A prophet. A prophet is one who receives direct revelations from God to be communicated to others. He is not primarily a foreteller, or predictor. Rather he is a spokesman or interpreter for God. The revelation that the prophet receives may or may not refer to the future.

Nations. Heb. *goyim*, also translated “heathen,” or “Gentiles.” Jeremiah was to be God’s messenger not only to Judah but to the outlying Gentile nations as well.

6. Ah, Lord God! Literally, “Alas! Lord Yahweh!” (see Vol. I, pp. 35, 170–173). The young man shrank back in terror from the thought of being a prophet. A sense of unworthiness overwhelmed him, and his nature recoiled from a task in which he would be out of step with the men of his generation. As indicated also by his bitter complaint later in his ministry (ch. 15:10), he dreaded the enmity of men.

I cannot speak. Jeremiah objected that he lacked the eloquence necessary to qualify him for the prophetic office. A prophet must speak to great men and to multitudes. How could he, without the powers of oratory, win the attention of the people or influence them for God (see on Ex. 3:11; 4:10)? He felt that he could not frame his messages in suitable language.

Child. Heb. *na’ar*, “a young man” (see Gen. 41:12; Ex. 33:11). Judging by the length of his ministry, Jeremiah was probably under 25, perhaps only 18 or 20 years old. *Na’ar* is elsewhere used of young adults (see Gen. 41:12; see on 1 Kings 3:7).

7. Say not. God refused to accept the prophet’s excuses and replied with a categorical declaration of His will. When God commands, thoughts of self are out of place. There remains but one duty—the duty of simple obedience. Jeremiah must go wherever and to whomever God chooses to send him, whether it be to idolatrous kings, corrupt priests, lying prophets, unjust judges—to men of every rank, however prominent or powerful. Jeremiah had said, “I cannot speak.” God replied, “Whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak.” God would qualify him for all that he would be called upon to do (see Ex. 4:10–12; Matt. 10:18, 19).

8. I am with thee. God promised to assist and protect His prophet. The consciousness that God was with him raised Jeremiah above his timidity and fear and made him invincible. He was assailed by many powerful foes, and was often in extreme peril because of his unpopular teachings and his bitter condemnation of wickedness; but this

promise, repeated at least twice (chs. 1:19; 15:20), must have been a source of tremendous strength and comfort to him. Similarly the far-reaching of Jesus, “I am with you alway” (Matt. 28:18–20), has brought courage and strength to Christians who have sought to obey the great gospel commission.

9. *Touched my mouth.* After the call of the prophet, came this solemn act of consecration, symbolizing the communication of new powers of thought and utterance. Thus touched upon his lips (see Isa. 6:6, 7), Jeremiah was assured that there would be no uncertainty as to his message. He was to go forth to speak the words put into his heart by the Spirit of God (see Jer. 5:14; 15:16; cf. Isa. 51:16; 59:21; Matt. 10:20; 2 Peter 1:21).

10. *Over the nations.* The prophet was invested with his authority as God’s representative. The word translated “set,” when appearing in the form here found, means to “make” a man an overseer, superintendent, or governor (see Gen. 39:4, 5; Num. 1:50; 2 Kings 25:23). Jeremiah was appointed a deputy of God with authority to declare God’s purposes concerning the nations. His word was to be God’s word (see Isa. 55:10, 11).

To root out. Or, “to pull up.” The prophet who announces God’s purposes is represented as himself executing them (see Jer. 5:14; Isa. 6:10; Eze. 43:3). Jeremiah’s work was to be of a twofold nature—destructive and constructive. The metaphors of Jer. 1:10 are taken from architecture and agriculture. Four verbs express the destructive phase of the judgments and two declare God’s purpose to restore and to heal. The book of Jeremiah is a comment on these statements.

11. *Almond tree.* Heb. *shaqed*, from the root *shaqad*, “to be wakeful.” The tree evidently derived its name from the fact that the almond is the first tree to waken in the spring. It blossoms in Palestine as early as January.

12. *Will hasten.* From the Heb. *shaqad* (see on v. 11). There is an interesting word play in vs. 11, 12. The following is an attempt to reproduce this literary device: “I see the twig of a *wake-tree*. . . . You have seen aright, for I am *wakeful* over my word to perform it”; or, “I see the rod of a *watch-tree* . . . for I am *watching* over my word to fulfill it.”

13. *Pot.* Heb. *sir*, a household vessel used for cooking (see 2 Kings 4:38) and washing (Ps. 60:8). This second vision was a symbol of the “word” that God was watching over to perform, and disclosed the instrumentality that would accomplish that word. The picture is that of a pot placed upon a fire which is made to burn brightly by blowing, hence, a boiling pot (see Job 41:20).

Toward the north. Rather, “from the north.” Apparently the pot was pictured as resting on one side and leaning away from the north, with its mouth ready to pour out its scalding contents southward on the land of Judah.

14. *Out of the north.* See on ch. 4:6; cf. Eze. 26:7. Although Babylon was east of Judea, military roads and invasion routes to Palestine approached Judah from the north. It was impracticable for armies to cross the desert directly east of Palestine. Hence the Hebrews frequently referred to Babylon in connection with the north. The direction has reference, not to the location of the home of the invader, but to the route he would follow in entering the land, for invaders from both east and north came from the north. The captives were spoken of as taken to the north country, and it was thence the Lord would cause them to return (see Jer. 3:18; 23:8; 31:8; Zech. 2:6).

An evil. Literally, “*the* evil,” that is, the evil that the prophets had long foretold (see Micah 3:12). The word for “evil,” *ra’ah*, does not always refer to moral wrongdoing. The word is frequently employed to describe trouble, misfortune, or calamity.

15. I will call. Rather, “I am calling.” The Hebrew construction represents the action as already under way.

Kingdoms of the north. See on v. 14. The tribes or clans making up the kingdom of the northern invader (see ch. 25:9). The passage may be translated, “the families, even the kingdoms of the north.” The effect of the plural is to accentuate the picture of the coming calamity.

Of the gates. The gate of an Oriental city was the usual place for administering justice (see on Gen. 19:1; Joshua 20:4; Job 29:7). The princes of the conquering foes would set up the seat of their power in the gates of Jerusalem (Jer. 39:3–5 cf. ch. 43:9, 10).

16. Against them. The sins mentioned had been particularly prominent during the evil reign of Manasseh (see 2 Chron. 33:1–7).

17. Gird up thy loins. The metaphor is taken from the Eastern custom of gathering up of the long, flowing garments with a girdle in preparation for journeying or for performing work (see 1 Kings 18:46; 2 Kings 4:29; 9:1; see on Ps. 65:6). Jeremiah was to prepare resolutely for his task (see Luke 12:35; 1 Peter 1:13). He was to speak out frankly and fearlessly whatever message God gave him.

Confound. The repeated calls to courage indicate the natural timidity of the young prophet (see 1 Tim. 4:12; 6:13; 2 Tim. 2:3). There is also an implication that Jeremiah would encounter great opposition in his work.

18. I have made thee. The “I” stands in contrast to the “thou” of v. 17. In the Hebrew both pronouns are emphatic. The prophet was fearlessly to do his part, and God would do His part by granting the protection and power required.

A defenced city. A symbol of strength and invincibility.

19. I am with thee. Jeremiah was warned that the conduct of the work of God would arouse the fiercest opposition of the enemy. Like the emissaries of Jesus, he was being sent forth as a lamb among wolves (Luke 10:3). However, the presence of God would go with him and be his protection (see Ex. 33:14).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1, 2, 5–8PK 407

7–9AA 599

9, 10, 14, 16 PK 409

17–19PK 408; 2T 17

CHAPTER 2

1 *God, having shewed his former kindness, expostulateth with the Jews their causeless revolt, 9 beyond any example. 14 They are the causes of their own calamities. 20 The sins of Judah. 31 Her confidence is rejected.*

1. Word of the Lord. This phrase introduces a series of prophecies extending from ch. 2 to ch. 6. This series is a retrospect of Israel’s past, and shows how present conditions are the result of past failures. The prophecy was given during the first ten years of Jeremiah’s ministry (627/26–c. 616 B.C.), probably in the 13th year of Josiah (see ch. 3:6; cf. ch. 1:2).

2. Go and cry. If Jeremiah was in Anathoth, he is now commanded to leave and go to Jerusalem for his prophetic labors.

I remember thee. Literally, “I remember for thee,” in thy favor, or to thy credit (see Neh. 5:19, where “think upon me,” is literally, “remember for me”).

Kindness of thy youth. Grammatically the phrase may mean either the kindness of God toward Israel or Israel’s kindness toward God. Here the latter seems to be emphasized. In her youth Israel had responded to the wooing of God’s love. In poetic figure God is represented as the Lover and Israel as His betrothed.

Espousals. Literally, “betrothal time,” or “state of being a bride.” The bridal state was at the beginning of her history.

A land ... not sown. Israel demonstrated the sincerity of her love by forsaking the comparative comforts and security statute of Egypt in order to follow God in the barren wilderness.

Holiness. Or, “a holy thing” (see on Deut. 7:6).

The firstfruits. The figure of first fruits was familiar to the Jews (see on Ex. 23:19; Num. 18:12, 13). Israel was as the most precious part of the harvest, the part that was dedicated as God’s portion.

Shall offend. No heathen nation was to be allowed to devour Israel (Jer. 10:25; 50:7; cf. Deut. 7:16).

5. *What iniquity?* See Micah 6:3, 4. God challenged Israel to show that He had been unfaithful or had broken the covenant. The prophet inquires in effect, “Has the Lord practiced any deceit or disregarded any promises? Wherein has He failed?” (see Deut. 32:4). This verse presents the touching challenge of a wounded love conscious of its integrity and faithfulness.

Vanity. A reference to Israel’s idols (Jer. 10:15; 14:22; 16:19; cf. Deut. 32:21; 1 Kings 16:13; 1 Cor. 8:4; see on Eccl. 1:2). Once Israel had walked after God; now the people pursued vanity.

Are become vain. Men take on the nature of the object they worship (see Deut. 7:26; Rom. 1:21–23; PP 306, 334, 335).

6. *Neither said they.* The people were basely ungrateful for the providential deliverances and beneficent care that God had lavished upon them, and lightly esteemed their Benefactor.

Brought us up out. Israel’s career as a nation began with a great act of redemption. The deliverance from Egyptian slavery is frequently referred to as the superlative example of God’s miraculous intervention in behalf of His people (Ex. 20:2; Deut. 7:8; Isa. 63:10–14; Hosea 2:15; 11:1; 12:9, 13; 13:4; Amos 2:10; Micah 6:4; etc.).

Through the wilderness. God’s preservation of such a vast multitude from the dangers and privations of the wilderness was a marvelous instance of His almighty power, as well as of His goodness and care (see on Deut. 32:10).

Shadow of death. See on Ps. 23:4.

7. *A plentiful country.* Literally, “the land of the orchard,” that is, “a land planted with vines and fruit trees,” a contrast to the “land of deserts” through which Israel had passed on the way to Canaan.

Ye. The change from third to second person makes the application of the message more personal.

My land. See Lev. 25:23; Deut. 11:12; cf. Lev. 18:25, 27, 28; Num. 35:34.

8. *The priests.* This verse describes the delinquencies of the three ruling classes, the priests, the pastors, and the prophets (see on v. 26; Micah 3:11).

That handle the law. The priests were to be experts in the law (see on Deut. 31:9; Ps. 19:7; Prov. 3:1), and to explain it to the people (Deut. 33:10; Mal. 2:6, 7).

The pastors. Literally, “shepherds.” This expression designates responsible leaders in Israel’s theocracy, both civil and religious (see Jer. 3:15; 10:21; Jer. 22:22; Jer. 25:34–36; 1 Kings 22:17; Isa. 44:28; Zech. 10:3; 11:5).

9. *Plead.* Heb. *rib*, “to contend,” “to conduct a legal case” (see Isa. 3:13; 57:16). God will yet prosecute His charges against His rebellious people. He will plead by inflicting judgments upon them (see on Ps. 74:22).

10. *Pass over the isles.* Or, “pass over to the isles,” or “pass over to the coastlands.” The Hebrews were admonished to direct their attention to other nations to observe the fidelity of these peoples to heathen gods and to contrast this fidelity with their own infidelity to the true God.

Chittim. The name here denotes Greeks in general (see on Gen. 10:4).

Kedar. One of the sons of Ishmael, who became the ancestor of a nomadic tribe living in the Arabian Desert (see on Gen. 25:13).

See if there be. The Israelites had shown a desire to imitate the surrounding nations (1 Sam. 8:5, 19, 20), but not in the matter of loyalty to religion. A diligent inquiry from east to west could produce no parallel example of infidelity.

11. *Hath a nation?* The question implies a negative answer. Only in extraordinary cases would an idolatrous nation discard its ancestral religion. Even today many adherents of heathen religions are truer to their gods than are nominal Christians to the one true God.

Yet no gods. The clause reads literally, “and they are no gods.” The “yet” translates the Hebrew conjunction and must not be interpreted as a temporal adverb. The gods of the nations are unreal. The gods that the idol is supposed to represent do not exist.

Changed their glory. Israel bartered the real for the unreal and traded the truth for falsehood (see Ps. 106:20; Rom. 1:23). “Their glory” was God, the source of all prosperity (see Deut. 10:21; 1 Sam. 4:21; Ps. 3:3). Elsewhere God is spoken of as the “excellency,” or, more accurately, the “pride” of Israel (Amos 8:7; Hosea 5:5). Other nations could have forsaken their false gods without any loss to themselves. But Israel, in forsaking their God, Jehovah, had acted not only contrary to the custom of other nations but also contrary to the dictates of reason.

12. *Be astonished.* Israel’s wickedness is so horrible that the prophet, in this impassioned personification, called upon the heavens themselves to be appalled.

13. *Two evils.* The two evils may be defined as: (1) rejection of the real, and (2) the adoption of the unreal. The first naturally leads to the second.

Forsaken me. The “me” is emphatic in the Hebrew.

Living waters. That is, “flowing waters.” The Hebrew phrase thus translated occurs in Gen. 26:19; Lev. 14:5; etc. On the figure, compare Jer. 17:13; John 4:10; 7:37; 3T 467; PP 413.

Broken cisterns. Water has always been a precious commodity in the Near East. Anyone who possessed a gushing spring of life-giving water would be foolish to trade it for a leaky cistern of stagnant water.

14. *Servant.* Heb. *‘ebed*, which may denote a servant either hired or in bondage. The question of the prophet calls for a negative answer. No! Israel is not a slave. Israel is God’s first-born son (Ex. 4:22).

A homeborn slave. In general, slaves were divided into two classes: those captured in war or bought, and those born and brought up in their master's house. God designed that Israel should have dominion and should not be held in servitude.

Why is he spoiled? Literally, "why has he become for a spoil?" The people could not blame God for the loss of their liberty. The tragedy was the result of their own doing (see v. 17). Men should not blame God for their own failures. They make or mar their destinies by their decisions.

15. Young lions. The foreign invaders, so called because of their fierceness and strength (see Isa. 5:29, 30). Tyrants and oppressors are often compared to lions (Job 4:10, 11; Ps. 58:6; Eze. 19:3, 6; Nahum 2:11, 12; Jer. 4:7; 50:17).

16. Noph. Memphis, an ancient capital of Lower (northern) Egypt, 14 mi. (22.4 km.) south of Cairo on the west bank of the Nile. The Hebrew name *Noph*, or *Moph* (Hosea 9:6), was perhaps a corruption of the middle part of the Egyptian name *Men-nefer*. In Assyrian the city was called *Mempi*, or *Mimpi*, from which the Greek name Memphis comes. Its remains are near *Mît Rahineh*. From ancient times Memphis was the center of worship of the god Ptah. In the time of Jeremiah, Memphis continued to be one of the first cities of Egypt, and was renowned for its cosmopolitan population.

Tahapanes. Usually identified with Daphnae, the modern *Tell Defenneh* in the eastern Delta. This city enters prominently into the history of the closing phase of Jeremiah's ministry (ch. 43:7–10). Noph and Tahapanes here designate the Egyptians who had inflicted injuries upon Judah.

17. Unto thyself. See ch. 4:18; cf. Ps. 107:17. The prophet pointed out the true cause of the calamities. God had not forsaken His people; they had forsaken Him. He had led them in the true way of life, but they had chosen another path.

18. And now. Heb. *we'attah*, a common formula for drawing a conclusion from what has been stated. The "now" is logical, not temporal.

The way of Egypt. Earlier prophets had denounced the attempt to secure freedom from Assyria by an alliance with Egypt (Isa. 30:1–7; 31:1–3; see Hosea 7:11, 16). Jeremiah here asks, What is to be gained by such an alliance?

A Christian today may well ask himself: "What hast thou to do in the way of Egypt?"—in its sins or in its pleasures.

Sihor. Heb. *Shichor*, from the Egyptian *Shi-hor*, signifying "the waters of Horus." For three possibilities see on Isa. 23:3. The exact location is unknown.

The river. Here evidently the Euphrates (see Gen. 31:21; Ex. 23:31; see on Num. 22:5). The LXX has "rivers," as though including both the Tigris and the Euphrates. "River" is here used figuratively of the Assyrian power.

19. Correct. Rather, "discipline," or "chastise."

Backslidings. Heb. *meshuboth*, "apostasies," "turnings back," or "defections," a word occurring most frequently in Jeremiah. Of the 12 certain occurrences in the OT 9 are in this book (chs. 2:19; 3:6, 8, 11, 12, 22; 5:6; 8:5; 14:7).

An evil thing. Defined as being twofold: (1) apostasy from God, and (2) indifference to God.

20. I have broken. The LXX and the Vulgate have “thou hast broken,” which is more consistent with the use of the second person in the remainder of the verse. The yoke and bands refer to the discipline and guidance of the Lord (see ch. 5:5).

I will not transgress. Literally, “I will not serve,” a reading supported by the LXX and the Syriac. A slight change in one letter gives the reading “I will not transgress.” This latter reading was preferred by the Jewish scholars who punctuated the Hebrew, and is found in the Targums. The thought seems to be that Israel was declaring her independence, and asserting her freedom from service to God (see v. 31).

Every high hill. A designation for the numerous sacred places where sacrifices were offered to Baal or where the lascivious rites of Asherah and Ashtoreth were practiced (see Deut. 12:2; 1 Kings 14:23; 2 Kings 16:4; 17:10; Isa. 57:5, 7; Jer. 3:6, 13; 17:2; Eze. 6:13).

Wanderest. Heb. *ša’ah*, “to lie down [like a prostitute],” in the shameless spiritual adultery of idolatry (see on Ex. 34:15).

21. A noble vine. Heb. *šoreq*. A choice kind of Oriental vine, producing grapes of a dark-red color (see Deut. 32:32; Ps. 80:8, 9; Isa. 5:1–7; Hosea 10:1).

How then? The perverseness and degeneracy of Israel were not the result of any neglect on God’s part but of their own perversity.

22. Wash. Heb. *kabas*, “to cleanse,” or “to full”; that is, “to make [garments] clean and soft by treading or beating [them] in water.” Self-expiation of sin is impossible, though men in all ages have tried it.

Nitre. A mineral alkali, natron, or carbonate of soda, a deposit of certain alkaline lakes in Egypt. It was collected in ancient times to make lye for washing purposes (see Prov. 25:20). The product must not be confused with what is now called niter, or saltpeter, which is potassium or sodium nitrate.

Soap. Not a true soap, but a vegetable alkali, obtained from the burning of certain plants, and used for washing purposes.

Marked. Literally, “stained,” or “defiled” (see Isa. 1:18).

23. How canst thou say? This question is evidently more than the prophet’s anticipation of a possible attempt by these sinners at self-vindication. It appears that the inhabitants of Judea repeatedly voiced this objection (see v. 35). Since Josiah had revived the appointed public worship of Yahweh, the people evidently persuaded themselves that they worshiped the true God, in spite of the fact that idolatrous heathen rites still continued (see ch. 9:13, 14).

Baalim. A transliteration of the Hebrew plural for Baal. The word is equivalent to the “other gods” of ch. 1:16.

In the valley. The prophet substantiated his charges by an appeal to the facts. Jeremiah probably referred to the abominations carried on in the valley of the son of Hinnom, south and west of Jerusalem (chs. 7:31, 32; 19:2, 6, 13, 14; 32:35). On the southern brow of the hill overlooking this valley, Solomon had erected a high place for Molech, the god of Ammon (see on 1 Kings 11:7). From time to time later idolatrous kings revived the horrid rites in the same vicinity. Ahaz and Manasseh made their children “pass through the fire” (2 Kings 16:3; 21:6; 2 Chron. 28:3; 33:6). To put an end to the abominations of this valley, the good king Josiah polluted the site with bones and refuse (see on 2 Kings 23:10).

Dromedary. Heb. *bikrah*, “a young she-camel,” here represented as running around in the heat of desire. Such is the ardor for idolatry shown by the people of Israel.

24. A wild ass. In her zeal Israel resembles this wild, unbridled creature (see Job 24:5; 39:5).

Snuffeth up the wind. In the ardor of her heat she sniffs the wind to ascertain where the he-ass is to be found.

Weary themselves. She is searching out the he-asses; they have no need to weary themselves in searching for her. In the same way the false gods would not need to court Israel’s favor. In her wild lust she pursued them (Eze. 16:34; see Hosea 2:7).

Her month. Her mating season.

25. Withhold thy foot. The sense seems to be: Cease this mad running after idols till your feet are bare and your throat parched.

There is no hope. The exhortation is of no avail. Judah is determined to go on with her sinful course. She reasons that she has gone too far to turn back.

Strangers. Here the strange gods (see Jer. 3:13; Deut. 12:2; 32:16).

26. Is the house of Israel ashamed. Better, “The house of Israel will be put to shame.” The Hebrew tense here employed may be regarded as a perfect of prophetic certainty. Such a tense form describes an event yet future as a completed act, thus emphasizing the certainty of fulfillment. There may be a play on the word “shame,” Heb. *bosheth*, here. Bosheth was sometimes used as a title of opprobrium for Baal (see Jer. 11:13; Hosea 9:10). Israel had chosen to serve “shame” rather than God, and her reward could be nothing but a shameful exposure (see Jer. 6:15; 8:9).

Their kings. Compare the three classes of leaders mentioned in v. 8.

27. A stock. Literally, “a tree,” or “a piece of wood,” here representing the material from which an idol is made (see Isa. 40:20; 44:9; 45:20; Hosea 4:12).

Thou art my father. How utterly stupid to attribute the production and sustenance of life to a piece of wood. The Lord placed the vanity of idol worship in its strongest light in order to emphasize the unpardonable flagrancy of Israel’s transgression.

A stone. That is, an idol made of stone (see Jer. 3:9; Deut. 4:28; 28:36, 64; 29:17; 2 Kings 19:18; Eze. 20:32).

Thou hast. The pronoun translated “thou” is feminine; hence, the stone is addressed as the mother.

Turned their back. A gesture of contempt and aversion (see chs. 7:24; 18:17; 32:33).

Time of their trouble. Compare Ps. 78:34; Isa. 26:16. Trouble often brings men to their senses (see Hosea 5:15).

28. Where are thy gods? Compare Deut. 32:37, 38; see on Judges 10:14. The challenge was made, not to mock the inhabitants of Judah, but to deepen in them the consciousness of their terrible apostasy and to cause them to recognize the real source of help and hope (see Isa. 43:11, 25; 51:12).

Let them arise. An insinuation of the lifelessness and impotency of these gods (see Jer. 10:15; Isa. 46:7).

Number of thy cities. Every city had its tutelary god (see ch. 11:13).

29. Wherefore will ye plead? The people had no ground of complaint. Their rebellion was too open to be glossed over. How could they still attempt to justify themselves? Any claim to God’s former promises had been forfeited by their transgressions.

30. In vain. Verses 30–32 re-emphasize the thought (see v. 5) that God is in no way to be blamed for Judah's revolt.

Your children. Here the children or people of Judah. The cities and communities of Judah were sometimes, as probably here, figuratively represented as mothers, and the inhabitants as the children (see Lev. 19:18; Joel 3:4–6; Zech. 9:13).

Your prophets. The men who had been sent to reprove their follies and exhort them to amend their ways (see 2 Chron. 36:15, 16; Neh. 9:26; Matt. 23:29–31; Acts 7:52). The height of this violence against God's messengers came during the half century of Manasseh's reign (2 Kings 21:16). Isaiah was one of the first of the prophetic martyrs to fall (PK 382; EGW, Supplementary Material, on Isa. 1:1).

31. A wilderness. As in v. 5 God challenges the people to tell what unkindness He has shown them that has caused them to turn their backs upon Him. Was God ever to them a barren place of no sustenance? Actually God had been Judah's source of supply for all life's necessities (see on Deut. 32:13, 14; Neh. 9:15).

We are lords. This phrase translates a single Hebrew word. However, there is considerable uncertainty as to the exact meaning of the word thus translated. According to the Masoretic tradition the root is *rud*, which means "to roam," or "to wander aimlessly." The statement would then imply a casting off of God's authority (see on v. 20) and would be an assertion of independence and self-sufficiency. The people would be saying in effect: "We will rove at will. We will do what we please. We are our own masters, and will regard no laws, human or divine."

However, the root may be *radad* instead of *rud*, in which case the clause would read, "we are subjugated." The LXX has "we shall not be ruled over." One of the manuscripts of the LXX reads "we shall not be enslaved." Aquila's Greek translation and the Vulgate support the reading "we are rebelling."

32. Attire. One would naturally expect a bride to cherish the outward memorials of her marriage.

Forgotten me. Judah had done worse than forget the outward memorials of marriage. She had forgotten her Husband (see ch. 3:14).

33. Why trimmest thou? Judah is represented as decking herself as a harlot to seek illicit relations with foreign nations and their idols, while God, her true glory, is forgotten.

Wicked ones. That is, wicked women, as is indicated by the feminine plural in the Hebrew. Judah had become so vile that even wicked women could learn from her. The wickedness of God's chosen people not only confirmed the heathen in their idolatry but also taught them new ways of practicing it.

34. Poor innocents. Among these were doubtless those who suffered because of the miscarriage of justice (see Jer. 7:6; 19:4; 22:3, 17; Micah 3:10), the children who were sacrificed to Molech, and the prophets and other martyrs slain, especially during the reign of Manasseh (see Jer. 2:30; 2 Kings 21:16; 24:3, 4).

I have not found. Or, "you have not found." The Hebrew may be translated as either the first person singular or the second person feminine singular.

Secret search. Heb. *machtereth*, "a breaking in [as of a house]," as in burglary. The entire clause may be translated, "Not in the act of breaking in did you find them." This translation suggests that the innocents, who were slain, had not been detected in any

crime (see v. 30). If those slain had been guilty of some serious crime, such as “breaking in,” the law would not have attributed criminal responsibility to anyone who smote them in the act (see on Ex. 22:2). But these martyrs were “poor innocents,” not criminals. As translated in the KJV the entire passage seems to mean that guilt was so open and apparent that God did not need to search for it.

35. *I am innocent.* The nation did not seem to be conscious of its guilt. Perhaps the people flattered themselves that though they had sunk low under the reign of Manasseh, Josiah’s outward reformation had turned aside the threatened wrath of God (2 Kings 22:17).

I will plead. Or, “I will bring into judgment,” that is, with the intent of punishing.

36. *Why gaddest thou about?* That is, why was the nation in such haste to change its policy and shift its alliances?

Ashamed of Egypt. To his disgrace and ruin Ahaz had formed alliances with the king of Assyria (see 2 Kings 16:10; 2 Chron. 28:16–21). The prophet predicted that an alliance with Egypt would result in similar shame and confusion. The prediction was literally fulfilled in the reign of Zedekiah (Jer. 37:5–10).

37. *From him.* That is, from Egypt.

Thine hands upon thine head. An expression of deep sorrow and of utter despair (see 2 Sam. 13:19).

Thy confidences. That is, those in whom Judah trusted or placed her confidence.

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6 PP 377

13 CH 300; CW 102; Ed 83; FE 168, 422; GC 478; PK 233; PP 413; 3T 467, 474; 4T 625; 5T 63, 519; 6T 164; 7T 150, 204, 276

21 AA 15; COL 290; PK 19

34 EW 76, 234; LS 206; TM 262; 1T 138, 219, 314, 511; 2T 47, 256, 361, 483, 506; 3T 192, 209, 243, 443; 4T 239, 392, 514, 646; 5T 11, 190, 234, 288, 662; 6T 144; 8T 155

CHAPTER 3

1 *God’s great mercy in Judah’s vile whoredom. 6 Judah is worse than Israel. 12 The promises of the gospel to the penitent. 20 Israel reprov’d, and called by God, maketh a solemn confession of their sins.*

1. *They say.* Heb. *le’mor*, literally, “saying.” The connection of this verb form with the context is not indicated. Commentators have offered various explanations for this anomalous construction: (1) It is connected with “hath rejected” (ch. 2:37). (2) A line originally reading, “The word of the Lord came unto me, saying,” has dropped out of the original text, leaving only the one word. (3) The Hebrew is an unusual equivalent for, “that is to say,” or, “for example.” (4) There is an ellipsis, and the word should be rendered by some such phrase as, “It is commonly said,” or, “I might say.” Whatever translation is adopted, the interpretation of what follows remains unaffected. No translation of the word appears in the LXX or the Syriac.

Put away. An allusion to the law of Deut. 24:1–4. If this prophetic message was delivered after the discovery of the book of the law and the resultant revival of interest in the contents of the book (2 Kings 22:10, 11), the illustration would have special force. However, the date of the message cannot be definitely established. At the same time Jeremiah may be alluding to the experience and message of his predecessor, Hosea. As an illustration of God’s dealings with a wayward people Hosea had taken back his wayward

wife (Hosea 2:14, 16, 19, 20; 3:1). Jeremiah had the difficult task of convincing the people of his day that God could not take them back as His own until they experienced a deep change of heart.

Shall he return? The verb may be understood potentially, “ought he to return?”

That land. See on Deut. 24:4.

Many lovers. Because Judah had been joined in solemn covenant relationship with God, her act of going after other gods was regarded as spiritual adultery. She was guilty not only of a single case of infidelity but of persistent and repeated wanderings after numerous gods.

Return again. There is some uncertainty as to the correct translation of the verb form (*shob*) thus rendered. The Syriac, Targums, Vulgate, and KJV translate *shob* as an imperative. This makes the Lord say in effect, Although according to legal regulations, I ought not to receive you, yet return to Me. The call to return is a fundamental idea in this discourse (Jer. 3:12, 14, 22; 4:1; Zech. 1:3), and so would not be out of place here.

However, *shob* is masculine in form, whereas God is addressing His people by the figure of a woman. The feminine pronoun occurs earlier in the verse, and since the figure has not changed, it would be natural to expect a feminine form of the verb. On the other hand, most modern scholars, following the LXX, translate the clause as a question, evidently regarding *shob* as an infinitive “to return.” The statement then expresses wonder or surprise that Judah would expect to return. The RSV reads “would you return?” and the ASV, margin, has “thinkest thou to return?” This interpretation seems to accord better with v. 2. Certainly before God could take these wanderers back there would have to be some evidence of a change on their part, and of seriousness of purpose.

2. High places. The scenes of Judah’s spiritual adulteries (see 2 Kings 21:3; cf. Jer. 2:20).

In the ways. Like a prostitute, to entice passers-by (see Gen. 38:14; Prov. 7:12; Eze. 16:24, 25).

As the Arabian. Judah’s eagerness for the idolatrous rites of the nature cults is compared with that of a desert bandit who lies in wait to despoil a passing caravan.

3. Withholden. As God had predicted (see Lev. 26:19; see on Deut. 28:23, 24), drought had come as a result of their apostasy (see Jer. 14:1–6).

Latter rain. The latter rain fell in March and the beginning of April, and the early rain, in October and November (see on Deut. 11:14; Jer. 5:24; Joel 2:23). Both were essential for a successful harvest.

Whore’s forehead. The figure implies impudence, obstinacy, and shamelessness (Jer. 6:15; 8:12; cf. Rev. 17:5). Affliction had made no impression upon Judah.

4. Wilt thou not? Better, “Hast thou not?”

From this time. Probably a reference to Josiah’s reforms, which began in the 12th year of his reign and culminated in the great celebration of the Passover feast six years later (2 Chron. 34:3; 35:19). Even though the king was in earnest, the response of the people was largely lip service.

Guide. Heb. *alluph*, “a friend,” or “an intimate”; used here for “husband” (see on Prov. 2:17).

5. Will he reserve? This seems to be a continuation of the supposed address begun in v. 4. The people express their confidence that the anger of their divine Husband will pass in spite of their unfaithfulness.

Thou hast spoken. A sharp contrast is drawn between Judah's specious words and her idolatrous ways.

As thou couldst. Or, "that you were able." Judah used all her powers in doing evil.

6. The Lord said. The prophet compares the attitudes of Judah toward idolatry with those of Israel. Judah was inclined to regard with contemptuous scorn the northern tribes, who had been carried captive by Assyria. Jeremiah points out that her guilt is, in fact, greater.

Days of Josiah. This would place the address in the early years of Jeremiah's ministry (see p. 19). It may have been delivered soon after Josiah's attempt to purge the land of idolatry and to restore the pure worship of the true God.

Hast thou seen? Israel had been carried captive about 100 years previously. "Seen" is here used in the sense of "considered."

Backsliding. Heb. *meshubah*, "backturning." Israel was Judah's renegade sister.

She is gone. The Hebrew verb form denotes habitual practice (see ch. 2:20).

7. Turn thou. Perhaps better, "she will return." The Heb. *tashub* may be translated either way, but inasmuch as the former translation assumes that the one addressed is masculine, and Judah is here clearly referred to in the feminine, it is more logical to adopt the latter translation.

Her treacherous sister. Compare Eze. 16:46; 23:2, 4. Israel openly broke her connection with Jehovah, but Judah professed loyalty, at the same time acting deceitfully. The specious insincerity of Judah was worse in God's sight than Israel's open profaneness. To Israel's faithlessness Judah added deceit and hypocrisy.

8. I saw. One Hebrew and several Greek MSS, and the Syriac, read "she saw." Either reading is appropriate to the context.

Put her away. The repudiation of the northern kingdom and the loss of Israel's national life came at the time of the Assyrian exile (2 Kings 17:6, 18).

9. Lightness. Heb. *qol*, from the root *qalal*, "to be slight," "to be swift," "to be trifling." This seems to be the only instance where the word *qol* has this meaning. The LXX supports this reading by its rendering *eis outhen*, literally, "unto nothing." According to this reading Judah attached no importance to her fornication.

Defiled. See ch. 2:7.

Stones and with stocks. Their idols (see ch. 2:27).

10. Whole heart. The reformation under Josiah (v. 6) was a mere outward turning to God. At heart the people still clung to their idols. After the king's death they lapsed into open idolatry (2 Kings 23:31, 32; 2 Chron. 36:5-8).

Feignedly. Literally, "in falsehood," or "in deception." Judah acted a lie in her pretended reformation.

11. Justified herself. See on v. 7. Hypocrisy was as offensive to God as open apostasy (PP 523). The fact that Judah possessed greater privileges heightened her guilt. Among Judah's advantages were the following: (1) An unbroken succession of kings descended from the house of David. During all the years of her existence as a kingdom,

but one dynasty ruled. As a result she was spared the political upheavals that plagued her northern neighbor. (2) The presence within her boundaries of the Temple and the visible manifestation of God's presence in the Temple. (3) The presence within her boundaries of the majority of the priests and Levites, official representatives of the worship of God. (4) The warning example of Israel's downfall for a hundred years.

In the face of all these advantages Judah became faithless, hypocritical, and intolerably proud. Hence, Israel, in spite of her open apostasy, was less guilty than Judah (see Eze. 16:51, 52; 23:11; Matt. 12:41, 42; Luke 18:14). "The greater the knowledge of God's will, the greater the sin of those who disregard it" (PP 584).

12. North. Here, the northern provinces of the Assyrian Empire to which the ten tribes had been exiled (see 2 Kings 15:29; 17:6; 18:11; Jer. 16:15; 23:8; 31:8). The exiles were invited to repent and return.

Return, thou backsliding. There is a play on words in the Hebrew, the word for "return" being *shubah*, and the word for backsliding, *meshubah*. The command is literally, "turn back, O backturning Israel" (see on v. 6). The appeal to Israel was doubtless to excite Judah to godly jealousy and repentance (see Rom. 11:14).

Cause mine anger to fall. Literally, "cause my face to fall." The idiom is illustrated in Gen. 4:5, 6 (see Job 29:24). God would remove the frown of His displeasure from them (see Lev. 17:10; Ps. 34:16).

I am merciful. The mercy of God is the ground of this conditional promise and the hope of all who will avail themselves of it (see Jer. 3:5; cf. Ps. 86:15; 103:8, 9).

13. Acknowledge thine iniquity. Repentance and acknowledgment of sin are prerequisites to pardon. Men must courageously face their own sins and frankly recognize them (see Ps. 51:3; Isa. 59:12; Jer. 14:20). Nothing must be kept back and there must be no vain excuses (see on Prov. 28:13).

Scattered thy ways. See Jer. 2:23; Eze. 16:15, 24, 25, 36. Israel had gone this way and that in search of new and alien forms of worship.

Strangers. Strange gods (see Jer. 2:25; Deut. 12:2; 32:16).

14. Children. Literally, "sons." Like the father in Jesus' parable of the prodigal son, God would welcome these sons who were wandering in a far country.

Am married. Heb. *ba'al*, "to take possession of a woman as bride or wife," or, "to rule." The LXX, adopting the second meaning, renders the clause, "I will rule over you." Note the mixed metaphors in this verse. First Israel is compared with sons that have wandered away, then to a wife who has departed from her husband (see Jer. 31:32; cf. Isa. 54:5; Hosea 2:19, 20).

One of a city. The prophet contemplated the return of only a few. The truly penitent would constitute but a small remnant. Men would be dealt with as individuals.

Family. Heb. *mishpachah*, "a clan," or "a subdivision of a tribe." "Family" here denotes a major subdivision larger than a city, in fact, one that might include many cities. That two were to be taken from a "family," whereas only "one" from a city, further supports the idea (see Gen. 10:5; 12:3; cf. 22:18). It should be noted that the word for "city" may denote a unit of any size, from a village to a large city.

15. Pastors. See on ch. 2:8.

According to mine heart. David was called a man after God's heart (1 Sam. 13:14; Ps. 89:20; Acts 13:22). The God-selected shepherds are contrasted with Israel's kings,

appointed, not by God, but according to the nation's desires (see Hosea 8:4). These kings had led the nation to apostasy and ruin.

16. When ye be multiplied. Compare Jer. 23:3; Eze. 36:11; see also Deut. 8:7–20.

The ark of the covenant. The ark was the symbol of the abiding presence of the Lord. As such it was an object of great reverence. Over its mercy seat was revealed the glory of the Shekinah, the visible symbol of the presence of the most high God. It was the center of ancient Israel's symbolic service. Jeremiah predicted the coming of the time when God would set up His abode upon the earth. God's actual presence would make the symbol of His presence obsolete. Glorious would have been the experiences of ancient Israel had the people accepted God's plan for them (see pp. 27–30).

17. Jerusalem the throne. If Israel had heeded the light from Heaven, Jerusalem would have been established as "the mighty metropolis of the earth" (DA 577; see p. 30).

All the nations. Compare Isa. 66:18; Zech. 14:16.

Imagination. Rather, "stubbornness" (see ch. 11:8).

18. With the house of Israel. Israel and Judah were to come together from the land of captivity and national unity was to be restored (see Isa. 11:12, 13; Eze. 37:16, 17; Hosea 1:11; cf. Eph. 2:14–16; 3:6). The enmity that had existed between them for so long would be taken away and both would turn to God (see Jer. 30:3, 10, 11; 31:31–33; 50:4, 5).

Land of the north. The lands of the captivity, Assyria (see on v. 12) and Babylonia (see on ch. 1:14; cf. chs. 16:15; 23:8). After this phrase the LXX has "and from all the countries" (cf. ch. 32:37).

19. How shall I? Probably to be regarded as an exclamation, "How shall I!"

Among the children. There is considerable difference of opinion as to the meaning of this phrase. Some refer the "children" to the other nations among whom Israel was to receive her inheritance. Against this interpretation is the fact that Judah is presented as the wife of Yahweh (the word for "thee" here is feminine). But it seems incongruous to reckon a wife (v. 20) among sons. Others make this phrase parallel in thought with the first part of v. 16 as though God said, "How will I establish thee with sons!" The LXX renders this passage, "I will set thee among children."

A pleasant land. Or, "land of desire" (see Ps. 106:24; Zech. 7:14; cf. Dan. 8:9; 11:16, 41).

Goodly heritage of the hosts. Literally, "heritage of beauty of beauties of nations," that is, a most glorious inheritance (see Eze. 20:6, 15). Much of the natural beauty and fertility of Palestine has been lost.

My father. Compare v. 4.

21. A voice was heard. In a sudden and dramatic transition (vs. 21–25) the prophet portrays his people as in heartfelt repentance and penitential confessions.

Upon the high places. The very places that had been the scenes of licentious idolatry are pictured as echoing the cry of weeping and supplication (see ch. 7:29). According to Eastern custom, lofty or prominent places were often chosen for public lamentation (see Judges 11:37; Isa. 15:2).

22. Return, ye backsliding. See on v. 12; cf. v. 14. The word for "turn" (v. 14) is the same as the one here translated "return."

I will heal. Compare chs. 30:17; 33:6.

Behold, we come. This should have been the people's response to this offer of pardon and restoration. The Lord gave them "the very words with which they might turn to Him" (PK 410).

23. Truly in vain. The Hebrew of the first part of the verse is very brief and consequently obscure. It reads literally, "Surely for the deception from hills, the tumult, the mountains." A number of Hebrew manuscripts connect the words for "tumult" and "mountains" into the phrase "the tumult of the mountains." For "from the hills" the LXX has "the hills." The general thought is clear. A sharp contrast is drawn between the delusive, worthless orgies of idol worship and the security of the worship of Jehovah.

24. Shame. Literally, "the shame," that is, the people's shameful idolatry (see Jer. 11:13; Hosea 9:10). The Heb. *bosheth*, "shame," was used also as a title of opprobrium for Baal (see on Jer. 2:26).

Devoured. Some commentators refer this to the large numbers of sheep and cattle that were sacrificed to heathen deities and to the children burned as a sacrifice to Molech, the fiery god of Ammon (Ps. 106:38; Jer. 7:31). It seems more likely that the general ruin resulting from Israel's apostasy is here referred to.

25. We lie down. The Lord desired a complete acknowledgment of sin and an acceptance of the chastisement without any excuses being offered or any palliating circumstances being solicited. A man in pain and grief frequently throws himself on the ground or on a couch (see 2 Sam. 12:16; 13:31; 1 Kings 21:4) in order to give way to the overwhelming emotions that crush him.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

4 3T 227; 4T 363
12, 13 DA 300
12-14PK 410
13 COL 158; MH 123
14 MB 64
19 PK 410
20 GC 382
22 GW 209
22-25PK 410
3

CHAPTER 4

1 *God calleth Israel by his promise. 3 He exhorteth Judah to repentance by fearful judgments. 19 A grievous lamentation for the miseries of Judah.*

1. O Israel. Probably specifically the northern tribes of Israel who were in exile, although some think the term is here used in a general sense. The men of Judah are directly addressed in v. 3.

Abominations. Specifically their idols (Deut. 27:15; 29:17; 1 Kings 11:5, 7; 2 Kings 23:13; 2 Chron. 15:8; Eze. 20:7, 8).

³Nichol, F. D. (1978). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary : The Holy Bible with exegetical and expository comment*. Commentary Reference Series (Je 1:1). Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association.

Remove. Heb. *nud*, “to be aimless,” “to be homeless.” The participial form of the verb is translated “vagabond” in Gen. 4:12, 14.

2. *Thou shalt swear.* Or, “if thou swear,” continuing the conditions of v. 1. Swearing by the name of the Lord was an acknowledgment of the supremacy of God (see Deut. 10:20; Jer. 12:16; see on Deut. 6:13). Oaths by other gods were to be discontinued. The people were to give proof that God was supreme in their minds.

The nations. The conclusion of the conditional sentence is now given: “[then] nations shall,” etc. God intended that Israel’s conversion should result in the conversion of the surrounding nations (see Ps. 102:13, 15; see pp. 29, 30). The blessings assured to Israel were, “on the same conditions and in the same degree, assured to every nation and to every individual under the broad heavens” (PK 500, 501).

In him. That is, in the Lord.

3. *Men of Judah.* The exhortation to repent and reform is here specifically addressed to the southern kingdom.

And Jerusalem. A few Hebrew MSS, the LXX, Old Latin, Syriac, and Targums read “and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem.”

Fallow ground. The Hebrew has a play on words which might be rendered “till the untilled ground.”

Sow not among thorns. Compare Jesus’ parable of the soils (Matt. 13:7, 22). Unless the thorns and weeds were removed, they would choke the seeds of reform (see Luke 8:7; 5T 53). It was necessary for Judah to make a clean work of ridding herself of idolatry and moral and social evil. No halfway reform, such as took place under Josiah, would suffice.

4. *Circumcise yourselves.* All the Jews had been circumcised in the flesh, but not all had been circumcised “to the Lord.” The prophet sought to reveal the real meaning of the rite and to counteract a merely formal, ritualistic conception of it. Circumcision was intended to be a symbol of the devotion of the heart to God and a mark of separation from idolatry (see on Gen. 17:10, 11). To remove the foreskin of the heart meant to put away all impurity (see Deut. 10:16; 30:6). True circumcision is inward rather than outward (see Rom. 2:28, 29; Phil. 3:3; Col. 2:11).

None can quench it. The prophet likened God’s anger against sin to unquenchable fire, that is, fire that no one could extinguish until it had completed its work of destruction (see ch. 7:20).

5. *Declare ye in Judah.* The prophet here begins a new discourse. The subject concerns the coming evil. He begins by telling of the dreadful preparations for invasion by a formidable enemy.

Blow ye. This was the signal of alarm by which the people were warned of impending danger (see Hosea 5:8; Joel 2:1).

The trumpet. Heb. *shophar* (see Vol. III, p. 39).

Cry, gather together. Literally, “cry, make full,” meaning “cry with a full voice.” The warning would enable the inhabitants to leave the open country, and with their families and goods seek refuge in the fortified cities. Fear of invading armies drove the Rechabites into Jerusalem (see ch. 35:11).

6. *Standard.* Or, “banner” (see on Ps. 60:4). A signal was to be placed upon a lofty pole, to direct refugees to Zion.

Retire. Rather, “bring into safety.” The Heb. *‘uz* means “to take refuge.” Families and goods were to be brought within the city walls.

Stay not. Compare Matt. 24:16–18.

I will bring. Literally, “I am bringing.”

From the north. An obvious reference to the Babylonians (see on ch. 1:14). That the evil would come from the north is repeatedly stated in Jeremiah (see chs. 1:13, 14; 6:1, 22; 13:20; 25:9).

In more recent times the view has been advocated that these northern invaders were the Scythians. The Greek historian Herodotus (i. 103–107) declares that in the reign of Cyaxares I (c. 625–c. 585 B.C.) these wild barbarians briefly became masters of Asia. He further relates how they came down from the Caucasus, defeated Media, subdued (western) Asia, and intended to invade Egypt. The Egyptian king, Psamtik I, bought them off with rich gifts when they reached Palestine (see Vol. II, p. 90).

Though certain features of this Scythian invasion would fit Jeremiah’s description, such as the direction from which they came (their swift movements, their strange tongue, and the desolation they left behind), other features would not. The Scythians possessed neither the skill nor the patience to carry on a long siege, nor did they carry vanquished peoples into exile.

Moreover, there is no historical evidence that the Scythians made any full-scale invasion of Palestine at all. They probably merely passed through on the way to Egypt, possibly taking the road via the Valley of Esdraelon (see on Judges 1:27) and the coastal road on to the south. There is no reference to any invasion of Judah by the Scythians or any other northern people during the time of Jeremiah. Nor does Herodotus say that such an invasion of Judah took place.

On the other hand, Jeremiah’s description of this enemy approaching from the north fits the Chaldeans exactly. Nebuchadnezzar is specifically named as the invader from the north (ch. 25:9).

7. The lion. Better, “a lion.” A figure of speech portraying the irresistible might and the fierceness of the Chaldean invaders (Jer. 49:19; 50:17, 44; cf. Gen. 49:9; Prov. 30:30; Isa. 5:29; Dan. 7:4; Rev. 5:5).

Is come. Jeremiah is describing the future invasion with the vividness of a dramatic present.

Of the Gentiles. Or, “of nations.” Judea, as well as the surrounding nations, would be attacked and overcome (see chs. 25:9; 27:6).

Is on his way. Heb. *nasa’*, “to depart.” *Nasa’* has the basic meaning “to pull up tent pegs,” hence “to strike tent,” from which is derived the meaning “to set out on a march.” Nebuchadnezzar “is on his way.”

Desolate. Literally, “a horror.” The repeated Chaldean invasions left the land of Judah almost uninhabited (see chs. 2:15; 39:9).

8. Sackcloth. A loose garment or piece of cloth made of coarse, dark hair, worn in mourning and humiliation (see on Gen. 37:34).

Not turned back. Josiah’s noble efforts toward reform had not been sufficient. Much of the wickedness introduced in the reign of Manasseh was still prevalent (see on 2 Kings 24:3).

9. Shall perish. Verse 9 describes the effect of the coming invasion upon the leaders. The expression, “the heart ... shall perish,” is idiomatic for a failure of courage.

The prophets. False prophets had seduced the people into a false sense of security. Because of the nonfulfillment of their predictions they were in consternation.

10. Thou hast greatly deceived. Some have found difficulty with this verse, as God seems to be charged with deceit. The speaker is presumably Jeremiah. The most natural way to regard the passage is to think of the prophet as expressing his feelings in strong language (see Isa. 63:17; Jonah 4:3, 4; etc.). Jeremiah himself used similar language elsewhere (see Jer. 20:7). The prophet may have expected the speedy fulfillment of such promises as those of Jer. 3:14–18. He may also have had in mind the prophecies of 2 Sam. 7:12–16 and 1 Kings 2:33, that predicted the permanence of David's house. Hence his strong disappointment at the vision of the impending calamity.

Among other suggestions are the following: (1) A change in vowel pointing to give the rendering, "And one shall say," etc. The subject could then be taken as either one of the people or one of the false prophets. Codex Alexandrinus of the LXX reads, "They said," "they" doubtless intended to refer to the false prophets. (2) The words are those of the false prophets, on finding that their predictions of peace were not coming to pass. (3) The passage presents God as doing that which He does not prevent (see on 2 Sam. 12:11; 16:22; 24:1), as if Jeremiah said, "Thou hast suffered them to be greatly deceived by their false prophets" (see 1 Kings 22:22; Isa. 63:17; Eze. 14:9; 2 Thess. 2:11). (4) The statement is an interrogation, "Can it possibly be that thou permittest thy people to be thus deluded?" (5) The word translated "deceived" should be rendered "disappointed," or should be given permissive force, thus making the passage read, "Thou hast permitted this people to be greatly deceived."

11. A dry wind. Because of its violence, its heat, and its excessive dryness, a dry, hot east wind blowing in from the desert was the climatic curse of the country.

High places. Heb. *shephayim*, "bare hilltops."

Not to fan. In Palestine the prevailing breezes were from the west. These west winds not only refreshed the harvest laborers but were useful in winnowing the grain. However, a strong east wind was in no sense useful or beneficial. It brought ruin to vegetation and was too violent for fanning grain. It was an unmixed evil, a fitting symbol of judgment without mercy.

12. A full wind from those places. Or, "a fuller wind than those," possibly meaning a stronger wind than those useful for winnowing and cleansing. Such a wind would blow away the grain with the chaff.

Unto me. Literally, "for me."

Sentence against them. This terrible east wind was a symbol of the judgments about to come upon the sinners in Judah and Jerusalem. He will "give sentence" not by word but by deed. In the Hebrew the pronoun here rendered "I" is emphatic.

13. He shall come up. The subject is not named, but doubtless the "destroyer" of nations (v. 7) is meant. The Hebrew verb is often used of going forth to war (see on Judges 1:1).

As clouds. Possibly a figure of the suddenness of the destroyer's appearance to execute God's judgments and of the thick masses of the invading hosts (see Eze. 38:16; Joel 2:2).

Whirlwind. A figure doubtless representing the swiftness of the enemy and the confusion resulting from his invasion.

Swifter than eagles. A frequent Biblical figure (see Jer. 48:40; Deut. 28:49; 2 Sam. 1:23; Lam. 4:19; Hab. 1:8).

Woe unto us! A cry of dreadful apprehension by the people as they find themselves hopelessly in the hands of the invading forces (see v. 20; ch. 9:18, 19).

14. Wash thine heart. Thorough repentance and heart reformation were the only means of deliverance left for Jerusalem. No reformation can save that does not reach the heart. The springs must be cleansed before the fountain can be pure. The tree must be good in order to bear good fruit (see Isa. 1:16, 17; Matt. 15:19; 2 Cor. 7:1).

Be saved. Though temporal deliverance from impending judgments is primarily referred to, spiritual regeneration would accompany a true washing of the heart (see 2 Thess. 2:13; Titus 3:5).

Vain thoughts. Rather, “wicked thoughts.”

15. From Dan. A designation of the northern limit of Palestine (see Deut. 34:1), frequently mentioned along with the southern limit, Beersheba (Judges 20:1; 1 Sam. 3:20; etc.). Dan lay at the foot of Mt. Hermon. The town was originally a Sidonian colony called Laish. In their migration northward the Danites captured Laish and renamed it “Dan” (see on Joshua 19:47). When Jeroboam selected Dan as the site for one of the golden calves (see 1 Kings 12:29), the town became a prominent center of idolatry. From this northern extremity of the land would come the first reports of the approaching army of the Chaldeans.

Mount Ephraim. On the location and significance of this geographical designation see Additional Note on 1 Samuel 1. The mention of Ephraim immediately after Dan gives an indication of either the rapid spread of the news of the invader or the rapid approach of the invaders themselves. The border of Ephraim was only a short distance from Jerusalem.

16. Make ye mention. The prophet calls upon the neighboring nations to witness the punishment about to fall upon the chosen people. The downfall of Jerusalem should serve as a warning to the heathen.

Watchers. The Chaldean besiegers of Jerusalem would keep so close a vigil that few, if any, would escape (see Isa. 1:8).

17. As keepers of a field. Cultivated fields in Palestine were usually not fenced. Boundaries were marked simply by stones set up at intervals as landmarks (see on Deut. 19:14). Watchers were necessary to protect the crops from animals and marauders. Jeremiah compares the tents and forts of Nebuchadnezzar’s army to the booths erected by shepherds and husband-men for the protection of their flocks and produce.

18. Thy way and thy doings. This phrase may be understood as designating the settled habits and individual acts. The phrase occurs frequently (chs. 7:3, 5; 18:11; 26:13; 35:15).

Have procured. See on ch. 2:14; Ps. 107:17; see 5T 120.

Wickedness. The Hebrew can mean either the wickedness itself or its resulting calamity (see on ch. 1:14). The context calls for the latter sense here.

19. My bowels. A cry of deep anguish. The Hebrews regarded the bowels as the seat of the strongest emotions (see Gen. 43:30; 1 Kings 3:26). This verse consists of a series of anguished ejaculations giving vent to extreme grief bordering on despair. The prophet is here giving expression to his feelings in view of the coming calamity. To the prophet was revealed the terrible destruction and desolation to fall upon Judah under

Nebuchadnezzar (see on Jer. 1:14). His words are descriptive also of the final days of trouble that are to fall on an impenitent world (GC 310; 9T 15).

20. Destruction. Literally, “breaking,” “crash,” or “breakdown.”

Is cried. Tidings would be brought of one catastrophe after another (see Deut. 32:23; Eze. 7:26).

Land. Heb. *’ereṣ*, which may be translated either “land” or “earth.” The destruction pictured in this chapter has its primary application to desolation of the land of Judah by the Babylonian armies, but describes also the conditions in the great day of God at the end of time (Ed 181; GC 310).

My tents. Used here of dwellings in general.

Curtains. That is, “tent curtains” (see Jer. 10:20; Isa. 54:2).

21. How long? The despairing cry of one who sees no prospect of a speedy end to the war.

Standard. See on v. 6.

22. For. Although God does not directly answer the question as to how long these judgments are to continue, He does state the moral reason for them. The implication is clear that as long as His people persist in the folly of rebellion, so long the judgments may be expected to continue.

Sottish. Literally, “foolish.”

23. I beheld. The prophet gives a graphic description of what was shown him in prophetic vision. The expression, “I beheld . . . , and, lo,” occurs four times (vs. 23–26).

Earth. Heb. *’ereṣ*, which may be rendered either “land” or “earth” (see on v. 20). On the application of prophecy to the immediate present as well as to the more distant future see on Deut. 18:15; see also pp. 25–38. By secondary application Jer. 4:23–27 can be taken as describing the millennial desolation (see GC 659).

Without form, and void. The same phrase is used to describe the earth in its original state (Gen. 1:2). The earth will return partially to that condition in the great day of God (GC 659; see on Rev. 20:1).

No light. Compare Gen. 1:2; see on Jer. 4:24.

24. They trembled. The prophet describes conditions during the siege of Jerusalem as they were presented to him in figurative language (see on v. 25).

Moved lightly. Literally, “were shaken.”

25. No man. In the scene presented to the prophet no human life was visible (see on chs. 36:29; 44:22).

26. The fruitful place. Literally, “the orchard,” that is, the most fruitful portion of the whole land (see on ch. 2:7). What had been fruitful, now appeared as a desolate wilderness.

27. A full end. Though the destruction described would be terrible, it would not be the final annihilation. The prophet predicted a return of Israel and Judah to their land (see on ch. 3:14–18). Likewise, the earth reduced to its millennial desolation will blossom again (see 2 Peter 3:12, 13).

28. For this. The elements of nature are personified and represented as mourning over the desolation of the earth.

Be black. The heavens are represented as shrouding themselves in dark clouds of mourning for the desolate earth.

Because I have spoken. The coming woe was as certain as the sinful condition that called forth the punishment.

29. The whole city. Or, “every city,” as the same Hebrew phrase is translated in the second part of the verse. The inhabitants of the cities would flee at the approach of the hostile armies.

Horsemen and bowmen. A characteristic manner of picturing Assyrian and Chaldean armies on the monuments.

Upon the rocks. Rather, “among the rocks,” or, “in the rocks.” Rocks and caves had often been used as places of refuge during the history of the Jews (see Judges 6:2; 1 Sam. 13:6; 14:11; 24:3; 1 Kings 18:13; Jer. 16:16).

Man. Heb. *’ish*, “an adult male person” as contrasted with man in the generic sense (Heb. *’adam*), as in v. 25.

30. When thou art spoiled. A rendering not requiring the italicized words “when” and “art” is “thou, O spoiled one.” The “thou” in Hebrew is feminine and refers to Jerusalem (see v. 31). The city is here personified as a woman who vainly adorns herself to please her admirers.

What wilt thou do? What course can “the daughter of Zion” (v. 31) take when she is besieged by the Babylonians? Her pride and confidence are ill-grounded, for her condition is desperate. Why does she keep on hoping against hope to save herself?

Rentest thy face. Literally, “enlargest thy eyes.” The reference is to the custom of Oriental women of putting a black mineral powder on the edges of the eyelids (see on 2 Kings 9:30). This black powder had a metallic glitter and made the eyes appear larger and more brilliant.

Thy lovers. The foreign powers to whom Jerusalem paid court. Judah constantly sought safety in foreign alliances (see on ch. 2:33, 36). But all these efforts to find security in these foreign “lovers” would be in vain.

31. Daughter of Zion. The name of the city or the inhabitants of Jerusalem in poetic personification (see Isa. 1:8).

Bewailleth herself. Literally, “gaspeth for breath.”

Spreadeth her hands. An expression denoting distress and a cry for help (Lam. 1:17).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

3 COL 56; PK 412; RC 63; 5T 53; 9T 62

14 PK 412

19, 20 Ed 181; GC 310; PK 538, 726; 9T 15

22 4T 596

23–26 Ed 181; PK 727; 9T 15

23–27 EW 290; GC 659; SR 415

CHAPTER 5

1 *The judgments of God upon the Jews, for their perverseness, 7 for their adultery, 10 for their impiety, 19 for their contempt of God, 25 and for their great corruption in the civil state, 30 and ecclesiastical.*

1. Run ye to and fro. The command is given to drive home the universality of the moral corruption prevailing in Jerusalem. The challenge reminds us of the old story of the Greek sage, Diogenes, founder of the Cynic school of philosophy, who appeared on the streets of Athens with a lighted lantern searching for an honest man. The fact that men

are bidden to “run,” “see,” “know,” and “seek,” forcefully calls attention to the great scarcity of righteous men.

The broad places. The market places, or public squares, where men from all quarters met together.

I will pardon it. Compare Gen. 18:25–32.

2. The Lord liveth. To swear by the name of the living God (see Deut. 6:13; 10:20, 21; Ps. 63:11; Isa. 45:23) was to acknowledge Yahweh as the supreme Lord.

3. Thine eyes upon. God sees through the pretense of man and scrutinizes the motives that govern conduct (see 2 Chron. 16:9; Prov. 5:21; 15:3; Jer. 16:17; 32:19).

Truth. Heb. *’emunah*, “firmness,” “faithfulness.” *’Emunah* is translated “faith” in Hab. 2:4, where, however, “faithfulness” is probably the more accurate translation. God is seeking for men of “faith,” or “faithfulness,” for He Himself is a God of “truth” (Heb. *’emunah*, Deut. 32:4).

4. These are poor. The prophet is shown making the deduction that such moral depravity was confined to the poverty-stricken masses.

They know not. Jeremiah suggests that their faulty conduct was due to their lack of religious instruction.

Judgment. Heb. *mishpat*, meaning, at times, a religious law or a system of laws decreed by God as right (see 1 Sam. 10:25 and 2 Kings 17:33, where *mishpat* is translated “manner”).

5. Great men. Doubtless the princes, priests, etc. Their rank and education afforded opportunity for studying the law and learning from it “the way of the Lord.”

But. Heb. *’ak*, “only,” or “truly” (see on Ps. 62:1). The force of the word here may be “especially.”

These have altogether. Because these have sinned against the greater light they are the more guilty.

6. A lion. The Babylonians are no doubt referred to by the symbols of this verse. The three animals may represent, respectively, strength, ferocity, and swiftness.

Evenings. Heb. *’araboth*, interpreted by the ancient versions as the plural of *’ereb*, “evening” (see Hab. 1:8; Zeph. 3:3), though *’araboth* is nowhere else the plural of *’ereb*. *’Araboth* is the regular plural of *’arabah*, “desert,” and therefore most modern commentators translate this phrase, “a wolf of the deserts.” The translation, “of the deserts,” better preserves the parallel with the phrase above, “of the forest.”

Watch. Heb. *shaqad*, “to be wakeful” (see on ch. 1:11). This lying in wait probably has reference to the siege of Jerusalem and of other cities of Judah.

Backslidings. Literally, “back turnings,” or “apostasies” (see on ch. 2:19).

Are increased. Literally, “are numerous.”

7. Sworn. See Deut. 32:17, 21; Joshua 23:7; Zeph. 1:5; see on Jer. 2:11.

Committed adultery. Both spiritually and literally (see on Num. 25:1; Judges 2:17; 1 Kings 14:15; 2 Kings 9:22; 23:7). The association of immorality with the idolatrous cults makes the figure doubly apt.

By troops. They thronged the house of harlotry, the idol temples, the scenes of both spiritual and carnal adultery (see on 1 Kings 11:5).

8. Every one neighed. Compare Jer. 13:27; Eze. 22:11.

9. Visit. For the purpose of punishing (see on Ps. 8:4; 59:5). This refrain is repeated in Jer. 5:29 and 9:9.

Avenged. The prophet uses human language to express how greatly the people had insulted God (see Jer. 44:22; cf. Isa. 30:27; Eze. 5:13; 6:9). God, their lawful Husband, is shown as no longer willing to bear their wicked abominations.

10. Walls. There is difference of opinion as to the meaning of the Hebrew word thus translated. Some interpret the word as meaning “vine rows,” others as supporting walls [of terraces]. The word for “battlements” seems clearly to refer to the “shoots” or “tendrils” of the vine. The prophet seems to have in mind the figure of a walled-in vineyard (see Isa. 5:1; Jer. 2:21).

A full end. A remnant was to be preserved from destruction (see v. 18; see on ch. 4:27). Hence limits were set to the raging fury of the Babylonians.

Battlements. Heb. *neṭishoth*, “tendrils,” or “branches.” The degenerate members of Judah were to be pruned away from the vine, but the stock itself apparently was to survive. God disowned them and gave them into the hands of the Babylonians.

12. Belied. Heb. *kachash*, which, in the form here used, means “to deny,” “to disavow” (see on Ps. 66:3). The people had acted deceptively against the Lord. They had denied and disavowed Him as their God.

It is not he. The LXX reads, “These things are not so.” It is hardly conceivable that the people absolutely denied the existence of Yahweh. They did, however, deny the prophetic message that warned them of impending doom. The judgments that had fallen were ascribed to chance or fortune. On the other hand the messages of the false prophets, promising peace and security for the nations (see Jer. 14:13; 23:25, 32; cf. Isa. 28:15), were eagerly accepted by the sin-loving populace.

13. The prophets. This verse is a continuation of the speech of the unbelieving Jews. The prophetic warnings, they asserted, would come to nothing and the prophets would prove to be mere wind.

Thus shall it be done. These unbelievers are evidently expressing the wish that the predicted sword and famine might fall upon the heads of the prophets.

14. Lord God of hosts. See on ch. 7:3.

Fire. Instead of proving to be wind, God’s word in the mouth of Jeremiah is represented as becoming a fire that would suddenly and irresistibly consume the scoffers as fire consumes dry wood (see Jer. 1:9, 10; 23:29; cf. Ps. 83:14, 15; Isa. 9:18, 19).

15. From far. Possibly a direct allusion to the prediction of Deut. 28:49. In comparison with such countries as Moab, Philistia, and Edom, Babylonia was a far country and is so designated in Isa. 39:3 (see Jer. 1:15; 4:16).

House of Israel. Here a designation for the two remaining tribes, the sole free representatives of the whole nation of Israel (see Jer. 6:9; 9:26; Eze. 13:16; 18:31).

Mighty. Heb. *’ethan*, literally, “ever flowing” (see Amos 5:24), and hence metaphorically, “durable,” “lasting” (see Micah 6:2 where *’ethan* is translated “strong”). There would be no escape from this unconquerable people whose numbers seemed never to dwindle or fail, and whose resources appeared inexhaustible.

An ancient nation. Babylon’s great antiquity seems only to have added to its pride, arrogance, cruelty, and skill in the art of destruction.

Language. The language referred to here is probably the Aramaic, which was fast becoming an international medium of diplomacy and commerce (see Vol. I, pp. 29, 30). Aramaic is closely related to the Hebrew, but was not at this time understood by the Jewish populace (see on 2 Kings 18:26). Some think the Babylonian language is referred to.

16. Their quiver. The Babylonians were skilled in archery (see ch. 4:29).

Open sepulchre. A proverbial expression (see Ps. 5:9), evidently referring to the devouring power of the Babylonian bowmen (see Isa. 5:28; 13:18).

17. They shall eat up. Compare Deut. 28:30, 48, 51.

Which thy sons. The clause reads literally, "They shall eat thy sons and thy daughters." The "eating," or "devouring," then can be taken in the general sense of destroying, or consuming.

Impoverish. Heb. *rashash*, "to shatter." The LXX reads "thresh." Judah's defenses would be completely smashed (see Deut. 28:52).

Sword. Here a general term for all weapons of war (see Jer. 33:4; cf. Eze. 26:9).

18. A full end. See on v. 10; ch. 4:27.

19. Wherefore? The thought returns to the main theme of the chapter: the causes of the judgments about to come upon the nation. In case the Jews should be insolent enough to ask the reasons for the calamities in view of God's promises to them and His choice of them as His special people, the prophet was to reply with a countercharge: Judah had forsaken the Lord and had turned to idolatry. God's promises had been given on condition of obedience and loyalty.

So shall ye serve. The punishment was adapted to meet the nature of the offense. God had given them His land, but since they preferred to serve foreign deities, they would be carried away to serve foreigners in a foreign land (see Deut. 28:47, 48).

20. Publish. Literally "cause to hear," or "proclaim." The message was for all.

21. Understanding. Sin, particularly willful sin, perverts the moral perceptions (see Jer. 4:22; Hosea 7:11).

Eyes, and see not. Judah was willfully blind and obstinately deaf. There is no one so blind as he who will not see. Deliberate sin cuts the optic nerve of the soul (see ch. 6:10).

22. Fear ye not me? In the Hebrew "me" stands in the emphatic position at the beginning of the sentence.

Sand for the bound. The prophet appeals to God's infinite power and consummate wisdom as exhibited in nature. The mysteries of the deep, its vast expanse and its rushing waves leaping mountain high, make the sea a fitting symbol of the wild and seemingly irresistible natural forces. Yet, God, in His universal sovereignty, controls the violence of the deep. He binds the ocean within certain limits, declaring, "Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further and here shall thy proud waves be stayed" Job 38:11; cf. Ps. 33:7; 104:9; Prov. 8:29). Though the individual particles of sand are easily shifted about, the vast beaches of sand constitute a most effective barrier against the incessant beating of the waves.

23. Rebellious heart. The sea and the waves were obedient to the great Sovereign of the universe, but men refused their allegiance. The people of Judah set up their will against the will of God. They revolted against God's law and service, and practically defied Him.

24. Neither say they. Neither the fearful grandeur of God's power as displayed in the sea, nor the gracious kindness of His works as exhibited in the blessing of rain, moved Judah to godly fear and holy awe.

Giveth rain. Nature has no inherent power to act apart from the Creator (see 8T 259). Her laws are not self-working; God is unceasingly at work in nature through them. Rain is a gift from the great Benefactor of mankind (see on Lev. 26:4).

The former. This rain fell in the late autumn. It softened the parched and thirsty soil for plowing and sprouted the winter grain (see Vol. II, pp. 108, 110).

The latter. This rain, so essential for the maturing of the grain, fell in the spring, in March and early April, before the harvest season (see on Deut. 11:14; see Joel 2:23). The fruitfulness of the year was closely bound up with the regularity of the rainy seasons.

Weeks of the harvest. Possibly a reference to the seven weeks between the Passover and Pentecost (see Ex. 23:16; 34:22; Num. 28:26; Deut. 16:9, 10). There was virtually no rain during these weeks, and the harvesting of the grain could proceed without interruption (see Gen. 8:22). The unusual occurrence of rain during the wheat harvest in the days of Samuel brought terror to the hearts of the Israelites (1 Sam. 12:17–19). The three main feasts of the Jews coincided with the three harvest seasons: the Passover at the time of the barley harvest, Pentecost, or the Feast of Weeks, at the wheat harvest, and the Feast of Tabernacles at the close of the fruit harvest.

25. These. That is, the blessings mentioned in v. 24 (see chs. 3:3; 12:4).

26. They lay wait. The metaphor is taken from the fowler's trade. Birds were captured with nets spread on the ground, in traps and snares (see Ps. 91:3; 124:7; Prov. 6:5).

They catch men. By their contemplated mischievous designs and their deceitful practices these wicked men made a prey of the innocent and unsuspecting (see Micah 7:2).

27. A cage. A reference to the wicker coop or basket in which captured birds were placed (see Rev. 18:2).

Deceit. The meaning is apparently that as a fowler's cage is full of the birds he has captured, so men's houses are filled with the goods gained by deceit and dishonesty. They had become wealthy by deceiving and overreaching one another in business (see Ps. 73:12).

28. Waxen fat. That is, they have become prosperous (Deut. 32:15; Ps. 73:7; 92:14; Prov. 28:25).

Shine. Possibly a reference to the sleekness of their skin.

Overpass. See Jer. 2:33; Eze. 5:6, 7.

The fatherless. The people were callously indifferent to their social obligations to the needy (see Ex. 22:22; Isa. 1:23; etc.).

29. Visit for these. See v. 9; cf. Mal. 3:5; James 5:4. Transgression called for retribution.

30. Wonderful. Heb. *shammah*, "an awful event," "a dreadful event," or "a horror." The word is synonymous with the one translated "horrible." An astounding and horrible thing would happen in the land. Verses 30, 31 summarize the reasons for the inevitable doom about to come upon Jerusalem. The prophets, priests, and people were united in evil.

31. Prophecy falsely. Literally, "prophecy with a lie."

By their means. Literally, “according to their hands,” that is, at their direction. The priests exercised their functions in subservience to these false prophets. This subservience of the priests to the false prophets is illustrated in ch. 29:24–26.

Love to have it so. Undoubtedly this explains the success of the false prophets and the priests. They catered to that which appealed to the heart of the populace. The people were willingly misled.

The end. The united wickedness of the leaders and the people made an “end” inevitable. The nation was challenged to give consideration to that sober fact. While the false prophets thought only of the present and their immediate prosperity, Jeremiah was concerned with the ultimate fate of the nation in the future.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

3 PK 414

9 COL 304

CHAPTER 6

1 *The enemies sent against Judah 4 encourage themselves. 6 God setteth them on work because of their sins. 9 The prophet lamenteth the judgments of God because of their sins. 18 He proclaimeth God's wrath. 26 He calleth the people to mourn for the judgment on their sins.*

1. Children of Benjamin. The inhabitants of Jerusalem are so designated probably by a figure of synecdoche, a figure of speech in which a part is put for the whole. In the original disposition of the tribal boundaries Jerusalem fell within the territory of Benjamin (see on Joshua 15:8). Before the time of David the city numbered its citizens from both Judah (see on Joshua 15:63) and Benjamin (see on Judges 1:21). The boundary between Benjamin and Judah ran through the Valley of Hinnom (Joshua 15:8), which was south of the city. Jeremiah's home town of Anathoth was in the territory of Benjamin (see on Jer. 1:1), and some have suggested that this message may have been delivered there, near the beginning of Jeremiah's ministry (see PK 409). This may explain why the call was addressed particularly to Benjamin, although it applied to the entire population.

Out of the midst. Earlier (ch. 4:6) the inhabitants of the country districts had been urged to seek safety by flight *to* the city. The present is a warning to flee *from* Jerusalem to the wild pasturelands on the south. Chapter 6 vividly describes the arrival of the hostile army from the north. The new appeal may have been issued to point out that the destruction would be so complete that even the greatest city fortifications would provide less safety than would the isolation of the countryside. On the other hand, ch. 4:6 may refer to the time of the earlier invasions, when the fortified cities provided comparative safety.

Tekoa. A town about 10 mi. (16 km.) south by west from Jerusalem, situated on a hill nearly 2,700 ft. (c. 820 m.) above sea level, overlooking the Wilderness of Judea. It had been the home of the wise woman hired by Joab in David's day (2 Sam. 14:2); later a defense city of Rehoboam (2 Chron. 11:5, 6; still later the home of Amos (Amos 1:1); now called *Teqû'*. There is a play on words in this verse. The words for “blow” and “Tekoa” both come from the Heb. *taqa'*, “to drive,” “to clap,” or “to blow.”

A sign of fire. Here, doubtless, “a fire signal” (see Judges 20:38, 40).

Beth-haccerem. Literally, “the house of the vineyard.” Formerly identified with ‘*Ain Kârim*, 41/3 mi. (7 km.) west of Jerusalem, it is now preferably identified with Ramath Rahel, 23/4 mi. (4.5 km.) south by west from Jerusalem.

Appeareth. Literally, “looketh down upon [from above].” Evil is figuratively represented as bending over the people and looking down on its prey.

The north. See on chs. 1:14; 4:6.

2. I have likened. From the Heb. *damah*, which may also be translated “to silence,” sometimes in the sense of “to destroy” (see Hosea 4:5, where the word for “destroy” is *damah*). Some favor the translation “destroy” here, making the passage read, “I will destroy the comely and delicate one, the daughter of Zion.”

3. Shepherds. This passage has been understood in two ways: (1) The leaders of the armies of invaders are compared to shepherds whose flocks devour every bit of vegetation (see on Num. 22:4). (2) It is a picture of conditions after the invasion, with the cities destroyed, the land a semi-wilderness, and Bedouins coming in to pasture their flocks.

4. Prepare ye war. Literally, “sanctify war,” or “consecrate war.” Battles were preceded by sacrifices, divination, and prayers. The practices of the Chaldeans in this regard are described in Eze. 21:21, 22. The Israelites also offered sacrifices and prayers (see Deut. 20:1–3; 1 Sam. 13:9–12) before engaging in warfare. Compare the expression “sanctified ones” (see on Isa. 13:3).

Arise, and let us go. The invaders excite one another to the attack. They are impatient lest any time be lost in defeating their foes and laying hands on the plunder.

At noon. There is no relaxing even during the intense heat of the noonday sun (see chs. 15:8; 20:16). Oh, that men today were as eager in spiritual warfare for the kingdom of God! Then no time or opportunity would be lost!

6. Of hosts. Or, “of armies” (see Vol. I, p. 173; see on Joshua 5:14; Ps. 24:10).

Hew ye down trees. The prophet gives a graphic description of an ancient siege. The area around the city was cleared. Trees were cut and the timber was used in the construction of mounds, embankments, towers, and military engines. The Mosaic law forbade the cutting of fruit-bearing trees for siege purposes (see on Deut. 20:19, 20). Plutarch records a similar law among the Egyptians, but it is doubtful whether other Near Eastern nations were that scrupulous.

Cast a mound. Basketfuls of earth were carried and heaped up to make a mound that was piled up until it was level with the walls. From such elevations direct assaults could be made (see 2 Sam. 20:15; 2 Kings 19:32; Isa. 29:3; Eze. 4:2).

Visited. Used here with the meaning, “punished” (see Jer. 5:9; see on Ps. 8:4; 59:5).

Wholly oppression. See 2 Kings 24:3, 4; Isa. 1:21; Eze. 7:23.

7. Fountain. Masoretic tradition reads “well.”

Casteth out. The LXX, Vulgate, and most modern commentators take the Hebrew as coming from the root *qarar*, “to be cold,” and render this passage “keeps cool,” or “keeps fresh.” In an underground reservoir the water is preserved and kept fresh and ready for use. According to this interpretation Jerusalem is preserving her wickedness.

Others, however, follow the rabbinical interpretation, taking the root to be as *qur*, meaning “to dig [for water].” Hence they explain this passage as meaning “making water

to gush forth.” According to this interpretation Jerusalem is incessantly gushing out wickedness and oppression.

Whichever figure the prophet had in mind, the thought is evident that the city was completely dominated by evil.

8. *Be thou instructed.* In the midst of warnings of terrible punishment comes this tender appeal from Israel’s God, who is infinitely good and patient, and unwilling to bring ruin upon His people. The Lord admonished them to be chastened and corrected by His discipline.

Depart. Heb. *yaqa’*, “to turn one’s back [in disgust].” God was loath to turn His back upon the nation of His choice (see Eze. 23:18; Hosea 9:12; 11:8).

9. *Thoroughly glean.* In this figure the grapes are the Jews and the gleaners the invaders, the Babylonians. The captivity and destruction would be carried on repeatedly and thoroughly (see Vol. II, pp. 95–98).

The remnant of Israel. The kingdom of Judah was all that was left of Israel in Jeremiah’s day. The ten tribes had been carried captive by the Assyrians (see Isa. 24:13; Jer. 49:9; Obadiah 5).

Turn back thine hand. Captives would be repeatedly carried off to Babylon (Jer. 52:28–30; cf. 2 Kings 24:14; 25:11).

Baskets. Heb. *salsilloth*, a word of uncertain meaning, occurring only here in the OT. Some suggest it may mean “shoots,” “branches,” or “grapes.” However, the LXX reads *kartallos*, “basket,” a reading supported by the Assyrian and by modern Hebrew.

10. *To whom?* Jeremiah appears to be overcome with a sense of the futility of his mission. Because of the obstinacy of the people all his preaching seemed vain.

Their ear is uncircumcised. In other passages the heart (see Lev. 26:41; Deut. 10:16; Jer. 9:26; Eze. 44:7, 9) and the lips (see Ex. 6:12, 30) are spoken of as uncircumcised, but this is the only reference in the OT where such an expression is used of the ear (see Acts 7:51). The people of Judah closed their ears against the precepts of God and stubbornly pursued their profane course. They were obstinate and rebellious.

A reproach. God’s message to them through His prophet was despised and treated with contempt. It became an object of scorn and derision (see ch. 20:8).

No delight. Religious exercises are profitable to the worshiper only when they are performed cheerfully and with the heart.

11. *Full of the fury.* Zeal for God’s cause was figuratively consuming the prophet (see Jer. 4:19; cf. Eze. 3:3).

Weary with holding in. A picture of exhausted patience.

Pour it out. See Jer. 7:20; Rev. 16:1.

Children abroad. All, irrespective of age or sex, would be overwhelmed together, from the children in the streets (“abroad” is literally, “in the street”) to the old and decrepit.

Be taken. That is, be overtaken by the judgment (see Jer. 8:9; cf. Isa. 8:15; etc.).

12. *Turned unto others.* All the things that the people held dear would be transferred to strangers. Verses 12–15 are closely parallel with ch. 8:10–12 (see Deut. 28:30).

13. *Prophet.* The spiritual leaders—prophet and priest—should have been foremost in checking the evil. Instead they were the chief offenders in it.

14. *Of the daughter.* The corresponding expression was presumably not in the Hebrew text used by the translators of the KJV, as indicated by their use of italics. However, these words are found in a number of Hebrew MSS, the Greek version of Symmachus, the Syriac, the Targums, and the Vulgate, and are used elsewhere by Jeremiah (ch. 8:11, 21, 22).

Slightly. Superficially, or lightly.

Peace. Heb. *shalom*, a word frequently used to comprehend all the good things of life. *Shalom* has been defined as meaning not only “peace,” but also “completeness,” “prosperity,” “welfare,” “health,” “friendship,” etc. *Shalom*, or its equivalent *salaam*, is even today the common word of greeting in many Eastern lands.

The so-called prophets of Jeremiah’s day glossed over the sins of the nation, and drew flattering pictures of Judah’s future prospects (see Jer. 8:11; 14:13; 23:17; cf. Micah 3:5). By their smooth and deceitful teachings these faithless leaders lulled the souls of sinners into a fatal ease. They should have warned of impending calamity and the need for repentance, but instead they asserted there was nothing to fear (see Eze. 13:22).

Prophets who proclaim peace and security in spite of transgression, when God has declared that sin is about to collect its inevitable wages, are echoing the satanic lie first spoken by the serpent in the Garden of Eden, “Ye shall not surely die” (Gen. 3:4). Through Jeremiah and other messengers God had announced that the day of Judah’s grace was about to close, and that the reward of evil-doing could not be longer delayed (cf. Eze. 12:21–28). But the false prophets denounced Jeremiah and his Heaven-sent message (see Jer. 28; 29) and sought to calm the people’s fears that there would be any interruption in their evil course of action. The false prophets said, as it were, “To morrow shall be as this day, and much more abundant” (Isa. 56:12).

15. *Were they ashamed?* “They” refers to the impudent spiritual leaders. If they had been ashamed of their monstrous wickedness, there would have been hope. But they were utterly callous, “past feeling” (Eph. 4:19), beyond the reach of the Holy Spirit.

Blush. Compare chs. 3:3; 8:12. Shamelessness is indicative of a seared conscience.

Visit. Here with the meaning “to punish” (see on v. 6).

16. *Stand ye in the ways.* The metaphor is that of a traveler who, having lost his way, stations himself at the juncture of several different roads, carefully considering and diligently inquiring after the right one.

The old paths. The true road was the one on which Judah’s godly forefathers had walked. The observance of the ethical and moral principles of the covenant would bring the highest spiritual blessings to the nation and to individuals (see PK 411).

Rest for your souls. He who walks in the path that God directs will find peace and quietude (see on Matt. 11:28, 29).

17. *Watchmen.* Compare Isa. 56:10; Eze. 3:17; 33:7.

Sound of the trumpet. The trumpet blast was the signal of alarm used by the sentinels on the walls of a city (see ch. 4:5).

We will not hearken. Compare “we will not walk,” in v. 16.

18. *Therefore.* That is, because the Israelites had closed their ears to severe warning as well as to friendly admonition.

Nations. Heb. *goyim* (see on ch. 1:5). The prophet summoned the Gentiles as witnesses to God’s judgment upon His people (see Isa. 1:2).

Congregation. Probably the Gentiles assembled, figuratively, as a jury. These nations were called upon to hear the sentence “upon this people,” Israel (v. 19).

What is among them. Meaning either (1) the height of their wickedness and perversity, or (2) the greatness of their punishment in consequence of their depravity.

19. I will bring. Literally, “I am bringing.” The judgment is pictured as already on its way.

The fruit of their thoughts. The inhabitants of Judah were to reap the fruitage of their own sowing. Their stubbornness and impenitence were bringing upon them swift ruin (see on Prov. 1:31). What men do is the result of what they are. From thoughts spring actions.

20. To what purpose. Jeremiah here emphasizes the fact that no mere external service is acceptable to God. The observance of the entire ceremonial system was useless unless accompanied by heart religion (see 1 Sam. 15:22; Ps. 40:6; Isa. 1:11–13; Jer. 7:21–23; Eze. 20:39; Hosea 6:6; Amos 5:21–24; Micah 6:6–8).

Sheba. Archeological findings (about 1950) now identify Sheba with Yemen, a country in southwestern Arabia (see on 1 Kings 10:1). The Sabaeans were a Semitic merchant people who dealt particularly in such luxury goods as gold, incense, and precious stones (see Isa. 60:6; see on 1 Kings 10:1, 2). Their capital was Marib.

Sweet cane. Generally identified with the sweet calamus, the choicest varieties of which were grown in India and southern Arabia (see Eze. 27:19). The roots, stems, and leaves of the plant yielded a fragrant essence when crushed.

Sweet unto me. Literally, “pleasing to me.”

21. Stumblingblocks. Probably here denoting the Chaldeans, the instrument of Judah’s fall and destruction.

Neighbour and his friend. Implying a general and indiscriminate destruction.

22. North country. See on chs. 1:14; 4:6.

Raised. Heb. ‘ur, “to be aroused,” “to be incited to activity.”

Sides of the earth. A figure denoting the remote parts of the earth (see ch. 25:32). The invader is elsewhere described as coming “from far” (ch. 5:15). The land of the captivity from which God would bring His people is described in terms similar to those used here (ch. 31:8).

23. Bow. The Babylonians and Assyrians were skilled in the use of this weapon (see chs. 4:29; 5:16).

Spear. Heb. *kidon*, probably “a lance,” or “a javelin,” a light spear that could be thrown at the target (see ch. 50:42).

Cruel. The ruthlessness and cruelty of the invaders was shown in the treatment given Zedekiah (see ch. 52:8–11). The king’s sons were slain before his eyes, following which his eyes were put out, so that his last visual remembrance was that horrible sight. He was then sent in fetters to Babylon. The monuments perpetuate a record of some of the barbarities practiced.

Their voice roareth. The invaders would be so numerous that the sound of their approach would resemble the roaring of the sea (see Isa. 5:30; 17:12).

Set in array. Armed and equipped for immediate battle.

24. The fame thereof. Verses 24, 25 describe the consternation caused by news of the arrival of the invader.

25. Go not forth. Do not venture beyond the walls of Jerusalem (see on v. 1).

26. Wallow thyself. An expression of extreme grief. To sprinkle the person, especially the head, with ashes was a token of grief, humiliation, or penitence (see 2 Sam. 13:19; cf. Neh. 9:1). At times the afflicted or penitent one sat in ashes (see Job 2:8; 42:6; Jonah 3:5, 6). Utter wretchedness or prostration might be expressed by wallowing in ashes.

An only son. The cutting off of one's posterity among a people who placed extreme emphasis upon the possession of children would result in extreme grief.

27. Thee. The reference is to Jeremiah himself (see PK 419) and not to the "daughter of my people" (v. 26) as the context might seem to indicate. This is clearly shown by the fact that the Hebrew pronoun is masculine. The Lord was evidently seeking to encourage the prophet to be faithful despite trying experiences.

Tower. Heb. *bachon*, "an assayer," "a prober," or "an examiner." The translation "tower" evidently came from associating *bachon* with *bachin*, the plural form of which is translated "towers" in Isa. 23:13. However, *bachin* is of uncertain meaning.

Fortress. Heb. *mibšar*, "a place made unapproachable," generally used to describe a fortified city. Jeremiah was to stand strongly for the Lord, as a fortification against which the wrath of man could not prevail.

Try. Heb. *bachan*, "to assay," "to examine," "to test." Verses 28–30 employ metallurgic terms. The refining process yields only refuse silver (v. 30).

28. Revolters. The LXX has "ones unwilling to hear," that is, disobedient ones.

Brass and iron. These are of themselves not valueless metals, but should they be discovered by an assayer who was expecting to find gold or silver, he would be greatly disappointed. God as the great Assayer was keenly disappointed in His people. They completely missed attaining to the high destiny He had in mind for them, and yet they considered themselves better than the heathen.

29. Melteth in vain. Continuing the figure of the refining process. God's great efforts in behalf of His people were of no avail.

30. Reprobate. From the Heb. *ma'as*, "to reject," "to despise," or "to refuse." Throughout his ministry Jeremiah encouraged the people to cast aside the dross of disobedience (see PK 410).

Rejected. Heb. *ma'as* (see under "reprobate" above). The play on words strikingly heightens the force of the prophet's message. The people of Judah had fallen far short of God's lofty ideal for them as a nation, and in their present state were wholly unacceptable to Him. He could no longer bear with their waywardness lest His long-suffering be construed as approval of their actions (see pp. 29–32).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

14 Ev 281; EW 234, 282; GC 655; PK 141, 435; SR 405; 1T 335; 2T 440; 4T 185; 5T 77, 83; see also EGW on Jer. 8:11

16 DA 331; GC 478; GW 306; PK 411; 4T 513; 5T 585; 8T 296

19 DA 588; Ed 146

27 PK 419

30 PK 409

CHAPTER 7

1 *Jeremiah is sent to call for true repentance, to prevent the Jews' captivity.* 8 *He rejecteth their vain confidence,* 12 *by the example of Shiloh.* 17 *He threateneth them for their idolatry.* 21 *He rejecteth the sacrifices of the disobedient.* 29 *He exhorteth to mourn for their abominations in Tophet,* 32 *and the judgments for the same.*

1. The word that came. This expression, occurring frequently in Jeremiah (chs. 11:1; 18:1; 21:1; 25:1; 30:1; 32:1; 34:1; 35:1; 40:1; 44:1), introduces one of the prophet's most striking prophetic sermons. The substance of this sermon is recorded for the most part in chs. 7–10. The sermon was given at the gate (ch. 7:2) of the Temple, and is often called "the Temple Discourse." It condemned the false confidence that the Jews had in their Temple and in the externals of religion. The similarity of ch. 7 to ch. 26 has led some to the conclusion that the latter is a summary of the sermon, designed to describe the results that came to Jeremiah because he delivered the message. If this be so, the sermon was given "in the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim" (ch. 26:1; see PK 412–415). It is of course possible that Jeremiah later repeated the essence of this sermon in "the cities of Judah" (ch. 11:6; see PK 414).

2. The gate. Evidently the gate of the "court of the Lord's house" (ch. 26:2). Since Jeremiah was a priest, he had full access to the Temple. It is probable that he was standing in one of the gates leading from the outer into the inner or upper court. From such a vantage point he could view the whole assembly of worshipers (see ch. 36:10).

All ye of Judah. It has been suggested that this sermon was given on the occasion of a national festival, when the Temple was crowded with worshipers.

To worship. The prophet implies that since the people had come to worship God, they should listen to the word that God had for them.

3. Lord of hosts. "Lord [Heb. *Yahweh*] of hosts" is one of the most majestic and awe-inspiring of all the titles of Deity (see Vol. I, p. 173). The title is common in Jeremiah (see chs. 2:19; 5:14; 7:21; 8:3; 10:16; 11:17, 20; 15:16; etc.). It emphasizes the fact that God has untold forces and powers at His command. In the OT "host" frequently refers to an army of men (see 2 Chron. 28:9; Jer. 51:3). The commander in chief of an army was designated "captain of the host" (1 Kings 1:19; etc.). Angels are also spoken of as a "host" (see 1 Kings 22:19; Neh. 9:6; Ps. 103:21; 148:2), and the term is applied also to the heavenly bodies (see Deut. 4:19; 17:3; 2 Kings 17:16; 21:3, 5; Jer. 8:2; 19:13; etc.). Israel's God has at His command untold "hosts" of spiritual and material forces. He is Lord of the armies of heaven. He is omnipotent (see Rev. 19:6).

Amend. Literally, "make good," "rectify," "correct," a characteristic expression of Jeremiah (see v. 5; chs. 18:11; 26:13).

Your ways and your doings. A frequent combination of words in Jeremiah (see v. 5; chs. 4:18; 18:11; 26:13; 35:15). "Ways" may be understood as referring to inward inclinations, settled habits or general course of life, and "doings" to the outward fruits or separate deeds that make up these customary habits.

Cause you to dwell. That is, "permit you to continue to dwell."

4. Trust ye not. Evidently the false prophets maintained that God would never allow the Temple, His dwelling place, to fall into profane hands; that the presence of that Temple in Jerusalem would serve as a kind of charm to protect the city and its inhabitants (see on Micah 3:11). Similarly today many church members trust in external church connections for salvation. They are more ready for outward religious activities than for the inner preparation of the heart.

Temple of the Lord. This phrase, repeated three times, expressed the pride that the people felt in the greatness of the religious institution represented by the Temple. It was a kind of superstitious attachment.

These. The Temple buildings were among the most beautiful structures ever reared. We may imagine the prophet pointing to these buildings as he repeated these words (see Matt. 24:1). But impressive edifices are a poor substitute for genuine heart devotion. Ritual and ceremony of themselves cannot atone for sin. Increase of facilities and numbers should be accompanied by a corresponding increase in fervent piety.

5. If ye thoroughly. A further development of v. 3. No partial or halfhearted reformation would be sufficient. Only thorough repentance followed by a life of strict honesty and integrity in relation to other men could avail to turn aside the threatened judgments.

6. If ye oppress not. True religion enters into every phase of life, including social relationships. The essential value and proof of religion is demonstrated by the effects religion produces on conduct (see James 1:27).

Stranger. The classes here listed form a general designation of all the poor and helpless (see Ex. 22:21–24; 23:9; Deut. 10:18; 14:29; 24:17–21; Deut. 27:19).

Shed not innocent blood. Doubtless including also “judicial murders” in unjust court decisions in addition to cold-blooded murders.

7. Then. The prophet gives the conclusion of the conditional sentence begun in v. 5. Upon the fulfillment of the conditions given in vs. 5, 6, security and permanency were promised (see pp. 27–30).

Cause you to dwell. See v. 3.

For ever and ever. See p. 30.

8. Lying words. A reference to the profitless and empty words of the false prophets, which pointed the people to the outward aspects of religious service rather than to a genuine inward experience (see on v. 4).

9. Will ye steal? The construction of the Hebrew is vivid and emphatic. The thought may be rendered, “What! stealing, murdering, committing adultery?” etc. The prevalence and continuance of these sinful acts are graphically represented.

Know not. Or, “have not known.” On the contrary, Jehovah had revealed Himself to the Israelites by the great act of redemption from slavery, the miraculous preservation in the wilderness, the proclamation of His holy law, and subsequent providential acts. The people knew by experience that He was God (see Ex. 20:1, 2).

10. Called by my name. See Jer. 7:11, 14, 30; 32:34; 34:15; see on Deut. 12:5.

To do all these abominations. These concluding words are hardly a part of what the people said. They seem rather to be the words of the prophet, who lays bare the secret intentions of these formal worshipers. In view of the fact that the threatened judgments had not come, the people went on practicing their abominations.

11. A den of robbers. The men who served and worshiped at the Temple were wicked men who covered their wickedness with a cloak of piety.

I have seen. The inhabitants of Judah could not hide their evil intentions from God. He was not blinded by all their vain oblations. He had seen all and would punish accordingly (see Ps. 10:11, 13, 14; Isa. 29:15).

12. Shiloh. A town in the territory of Ephraim whose location is indicated in Judges 21:19. Its central position made it a desirable site for the sanctuary (see Joshua 18:1).

Shiloh was the home of the ark for 300 years. At the end of that period the ark fell into the hands of the Philistines (see 1 Sam. 4:10, 11). Because of Israel's grievous idolatry God "forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh" (Ps. 78:60). The Philistines captured the ark and presumably at this time destroyed the city (see on 1 Sam. 5:1).

The site of Shiloh, now known as *Seilûn*, was excavated by a group of Danish archeologists under the leadership of H. Kjaer from 1926 to 1932. They reached the conclusion that the city was occupied in the Middle Bronze Age and again from about the 13th to the 11th century B.C.; that about the beginning of the 11th century it was destroyed by fire; and that apparently the town was little occupied from about 1100 to 300 B.C. These archeological findings are in harmony with the Biblical data. Although the Bible gives no definite account of the city's destruction, it does mention the defeat of the Israelites by the Philistines at Ebenezer and Aphek and the capture of the ark (1 Sam. 4:1–11). Probably the city was burned at this time.

What I did to it. Could the ark in Jerusalem guarantee any greater immunity to that city than it had to Shiloh of old? The fate of Shiloh shows that it is not safe to depend upon mere external worship for salvation. Eli lightly regarded the wicked practices of his sons (see 1 Sam. 2:12–17, 22–25; PP 575–580), and the people depended on the ark, rather than on true heart religion, to bring them the approval of God. These sins brought upon Shiloh the judgment of God (see 1 Sam. 4:17; Ps. 78:55–64). Jeremiah warns the people that the same chastisement that came upon Shiloh and its sanctuary is about to descend upon Jerusalem and its Temple (Jer. 7:14).

The wickedness. See 1 Sam. 2:12.

13. Rising up early and speaking. An idiom meaning to speak earnestly and continuously. The expression is peculiar to Jeremiah, occurring frequently, sometimes with slight variations (see Jer. 7:25; 11:7; 25:3, 4; 26:5; 29:19; 32:33; 35:14, 15; 44:4; cf. 2 Chron. 36:15, 16). However, the people of Judah would not listen, no matter how earnestly or unremittingly God spoke to them (see Prov. 1:24; Matt. 23:37).

14. Called by my name. See on v. 10.

Ye trust. See on v. 4.

Shiloh. Jeremiah used the destruction of this city as an object lesson of what was to happen to Jerusalem and its Temple (Jer. 26:9; Micah 3:12).

15. Cast you out. That is, exile you to a foreign land. The land of Canaan was Jehovah's land (see Lev. 25:23; Hosea 9:3), a land of His special care, ever under His watchful eye (see Deut. 11:12). From that sphere of watchful care Judah would now be removed (see Jer. 15:1; 23:39; 32:31; 52:3), even as the northern kingdom of Israel had been carried captive by Assyria (see 2 Kings 17:18–23; 23:27).

Ephraim. A term often used to designate the northern tribes (see Isa. 7:2; Hosea 4:17; 5:9; 12:1; cf. Ps. 78:67, 68). The tribe of Ephraim had been the most numerous and powerful in the north. Also from that tribe Jeroboam, the first king of the northern kingdom, had come. Hence the term "Ephraim" came to be applied to the whole kingdom.

16. Pray not. Like other prophets of God, Jeremiah was a man of prayer, a man anxious to intercede in behalf of his people (see Jer. 11:14; 18:20; cf. Gen. 18:23–32; Ex. 33:11–14; Num. 14:13–20; 1 Sam. 7:9, 10; 12:17–19, 23; Ps. 106:23). Since the nation refused to reform, nothing could turn aside the doom that was coming. The chastisement and discipline must be allowed to do its work. Intercessory prayer to avert the threatened

judgments would be unavailing (see Jer. 11:14; 14:11, 12; 15:1; cf. Ex. 32:10; 1 John 5:16).

17. *Seest thou not?* If Jeremiah wished to know the reasons for the prohibition mentioned in v. 16, he needed but to consider the facts. The shameless apostasy of God's professed people was open, public, and impudent.

18. *Children.* The entire family, including the children, was united in idolatrous worship; hence the sweeping character of the judgment pronounced upon them (see on ch. 6:11).

Cakes. Heb. *kawwanim*, "sacrificial cakes." The offering of sacrificial cakes was a characteristic element in a number of Near Eastern cults. This heathen practice later found its way into Christianity. Epiphanius (*Against Heresies* lxxviii. 23; lxxix. 1) declared that some women go so far as to "offer cakes in the name and to the honor of the blessed Virgin." "Upon certain days they present bread and offer it in the name of Mary. But they all partake of this." The sacrificial cakes of Jeremiah's day were a kind of meal offering with which a libation, or drink offering, was combined (see ch. 44:19, 25) as a part of the worship. It is thought that the figure of the goddess may have been stamped upon the cakes.

Queen of heaven. See on ch. 44:17.

Other gods. The worship of the queen of heaven was but one form of foreign idolatry being carried on.

19. *Provoke themselves.* Although the words in italics were supplied in an attempt to complete the sense, they diminish the abrupt force of the Hebrew: "Do they provoke me? ... Is it not themselves?" The consequences of the people's own idolatry were to fall on their own heads (see Job 35:6, 8; Prov. 8:36).

Confusion. See ch. 3:25.

20. *Not be quenched.* No human power would be able to extinguish the fires of judgment once they had been kindled (see Jer. 4:4; 15:14; 17:27; 21:12; Lam. 2:3; 4:11; cf. Deut. 32:22).

21. *Lord of hosts.* See on v. 3.

Burnt offerings. From the Heb. *'olah*, literally, "that which goes up" (see on Gen. 8:20; Lev. 1:3). The entire offering was consumed in the fire of the altar (see Lev. 1:9).

Sacrifices. Heb. *zebachim*, a general term applied to all oblations in which the flesh of the victim was eaten (see on peace offerings, Vol. I, pp. 700, 701). The prophet declared that the people of Judah might as well eat the flesh of the burnt offerings as that of the peace offerings, for God would accept neither from them (see Jer. 6:20; Hosea 9:4). Multiplication of sacrifices could not avert the coming judgment.

22. *I spake not.* This is one of those difficult passages of the Bible in which the literal and superficial meaning seems to contradict the plain statements of other scriptures. Jeremiah appears to deny that at Sinai God gave any instruction regarding sacrificial offerings. It is, however, not necessary to understand his language in that way. That the prophet is not denying the validity of the sacrificial system is clear from other statements from his own mouth (chs. 17:26; 31:14; 33:11, 17-24). How then is his statement to be understood? Jeremiah is obviously employing a rhetorical device by which in a comparison of two ideas the predominance of the one is shown by the denial of the other. Other examples of this device are: (1) Gen. 45:8. Here Joseph tells his brethren that it was

not they that had sent him to Egypt, but God, though patently his brethren had had a large hand in the affair. (2) Ex. 16:8. Here Moses tells the rebellious multitude that their murmurings were not against him but against God, though their complainings had clearly been directed against Moses. A similar device was employed by Jesus (Luke 14:26). Taken literally, His words appear to command men to hate the members of their own families. However, He was simply seeking to emphasize that love of God must supersede love to men. By “hate” He meant “love less.”

The passage emphasizes that obedience to moral law ranks above obedience to a ceremonial system (see 1 Sam. 15:22; Ps. 51:16, 17). External observances were designed to aid in preserving sincere obedience (see Deut. 6:1–3), but never to be a substitute for holiness of heart. Of the type of worship rendered to God by Jeremiah’s compatriots, God had never spoken at Sinai.

23. I will be your God. See Ex. 6:7; Lev. 26:12; Deut. 29:13. The phrase occurs repeatedly in Jeremiah (chs. 11:4; 24:7; 30:22; 31:3; 32:38).

All the ways. This passage is similar to that found in Deut. 5:33 (see Deut. 9:12, 16; 11:28; 31:29).

That it may be well. A common phrase in Jeremiah (see chs. 38:20; 40:9; 42:6), found also in the book of Deuteronomy (see Deut. 4:40; 5:16, 33; 6:18).

24. Hearkened. Heb. *shamaʿ*, “to hear”; hence, “to listen to,” “to give heed to,” or “to obey.” Verses 24–28 recite the sad fact of Israel’s disobedience to the beneficent commands of Jehovah (see Ps. 81:11, 12).

Inclined their ear. See Isa. 55:3; Jer. 25:4; 44:5.

Imagination. Heb. *sheriruth*, “firmness,” or “stubbornness”; in the OT always connected with “heart” (see Jer. 3:17; 9:14; 11:8; 13:10; 16:12; 18:12; 23:17; cf. Deut. 29:19; Ps. 81:12).

Went backward. See v. 26; Jer. 2:27; 32:33; cf. Neh. 9:29; Hosea 4:16. Judah was like a headstrong ox that draws back and refuses to place its neck under the yoke. There can be no standstill in religious and moral experience. There is either progress or backsliding (see 5T 93).

25. My servants. Compare Matt. 21:33–41, 45).

The prophets. Compare 2 Chron. 36:15, 16.

Rising up early. See on v. 13.

26. Hearkened. See on v. 24.

Hardened their neck. A figure expressing obstinacy (see on 2 Kings 17:14).

Worse than. The people of Jeremiah’s day sinned against greater light. They did not profit from the experiences of their forefathers. Furthermore the prophet’s countrymen had set up objects of idolatry within the very precincts of the Temple (see Jer. 7:30; cf. 2 Kings 21:7).

28. A nation. Literally, “the nation.” Israel stood out as a prominent example of obstinacy and rebellion (see Isa. 1:4). Her guilt was greatly increased by her covenant privileges.

Truth. That is, faithfulness or fidelity (see on ch. 5:3).

29. Cut off thine hair. The verb and the possessive pronoun “thine” are feminine in the Hebrew, showing that a woman is addressed. The gender is indicated in the KJV by the words “O Jerusalem,” which are supplied. The city is likened to a woman who, in the depth of her grief for her lost children, cuts off her hair and makes her way to the hills to

bewail her bereavement (see Judges 11:37; Lam. 1:1–3). Cutting the hair was a sign of extreme sorrow (Job 1:20; Isa. 15:2; Jer. 16:6; 48:37; Micah 1:16). Some have seen a reference here to the flowing locks that the Nazirites wore as the badge or token of their consecration to God (see Num. 6:19), locks which, when a Nazirite became contaminated through contact with the dead, he was to shave off (Num. 6:6–21).

High places. Heb. *shephayim*, “bare hilltops.”

30. Set their abominations. Manasseh had profaned the house of God by placing in it a graven image of Asherah (see 2 Kings 21:5, 7 see on Jer. 7:18). The people were not content to carry on licentious rites at the old Canaanite shrines or to burn incense to the host of heaven on the roofs of their houses (see Jer. 19:13), but they went so far as to pollute God’s dwelling place (see chs. 23:11; 32:34).

31. High places. The Hebrew word used here, *bamoth*, is different from that translated “high places” in v. 29, and refers to established places for idolatrous worship (see 1 Kings 11:7; 2 Kings 17:9; Eze. 16:16).

Tophet. A place in the Valley of Hinnom where children were sacrificed to Molech (2 Kings 23:10) and to Baal (Jer. 19:5, 6). The derivation of “Tophet” is uncertain. Some consider the word to be derived from the Heb. *tuph*, meaning “to spit,” or “spew out,” and regard it as a term of abomination or abhorrence. Tophet may have been an opprobrious title for this center of idolatry, as *bosheth*, “shame,” was for Baal (see on Judges 6:32; 2 Sam. 2:8). However, others believe that Tophet is derived from *toph*, a “hand drum” (see Vol. III, pp. 30, 31), and assert that the name was given to this place because of the custom of using drums to drown the cries of the children being sacrificed. In his *Paradise Lost* (bk. I, ll. 391–396) Milton alludes to such a practice:

“First, Moloch, horrid king, besmeared with blood
Of human sacrifice, and parents’ tears;
Though for the noise of drums and timbrels loud
Their children’s cries unheard, that passed through fire
To his grim idol.”

Hinnom. A valley south and west of Jerusalem now called *Wādī er-Rabâbeh*.

Anciently it was probably a deep and narrow ravine with steep, rocky sides, but the erosion of the centuries has made the depression less pronounced. During the period of the kings of Judah the valley became identified with the worship of Molech. Solomon was the first to introduce this abominable rite (see 1 Kings 11:7; 2 Kings 23:13). Molech worship (see on Lev. 18:21) became particularly prominent in the days of Ahaz and Manasseh (see 2 Chron. 28:3; 33:6). To put an end to these abominations Josiah “defiled” the valley (2 Kings 23:10, 14), making it, according to tradition, the receptacle of carcasses and filth. The book of Enoch (27:1) refers to the place as “the accursed valley.” The Greek name *gehenna* in the NT is a transliteration of the Heb. *ge Hinnom*, the name of this valley.

Burn their sons. The sacrificing of children formed part of the idolatrous worship of the Phoenicians, Moabites, Ammonites, and others. This horrid practice was taken over by Ahaz (see on 2 Kings 16:3) and Manasseh (see on 2 Kings 21:6). Diodorus Siculus (xx. 14) describes such a sacrifice to “Cronus of Tyre” (footnote: Baal or Moloch) as it took place in his day in Carthage, a Phoenician colony. The bronze statue of the god had

the form of a human figure with outstretched arms extending toward the ground. The child sacrificed, when placed on the arms, rolled down into a pit filled with fire. Diodorus is unclear as to whether the child was burned alive or was first slain, as usually with a burnt offering (see Jer. 19:5; Eze. 16:20, 21). Plutarch (*On Superstition* 13), describing such rites, says the child's throat was cut. The mothers, standing by, were forbidden to weep; flutes and drums drowned the sounds of lament. It is possible that in the time of Jeremiah the children were first slain. Such sacrifices, the psalmist declared, were offered "unto devils" (Ps. 106:37, 38).

Commanded them not. See chs. 19:5; 32:35. Not only had God not commanded these rites, He had strictly forbidden such practices under the severest penalties (see Lev. 18:21; 20:1–5; Deut. 12:31; 18:9, 10).

32. Till there be no place. See ch. 19:6–15. Literally, "from there being no place." The thought seems to be that the slaughter would be so great that no burying place would be left.

33. Meat for the fowls. A great number of corpses would remain unburied (see Deut. 28:26; Jer. 16:4; 19:7; Jer. 34:20), because of the extent of the slaughter and the small number of survivors.

Fray. An obsolete English word meaning "to frighten." The city would become so nearly depopulated that there would be no one to scare away the birds or beasts from feeding on the corpses (cf. Rev. 19:17, 18, 21).

34. Voice of mirth. Woes and lamentations would take the place of mirth and gladness. Especially mentioned as ceasing were the joyous songs and music with which the bridegroom and his bride were escorted from her home to his (see Isa. 24:7, 8; Jer. 16:9; Rev. 18:23).

Desolate. Heb. *chorbah*, used of places that were once inhabited but had fallen into ruins. The land would become a veritable waste and desert.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

2–7PK 413

4 COL 292; FE 398; 4T 535; 5T 486

10 TM 79

12, 14 PP 514

23 ML 283

23, 24, 28 PK 414

31 PP 337

CHAPTER 8

1 *The calamity of the Jews, both dead and alive.* 4 *He upbraideth their foolish and shameless impenitency.* 13 *He sheweth their grievous judgment,* 18 *and bewaileth their desperate estate.*

1. At that time. That is, the time when the events recorded in ch. 7:32–34 would take place.

Bring out the bones. Some have suggested that the motive for such a desecration would be plunder, a search for treasures, ornaments, insignia, etc., commonly buried with kings. The context suggests that the motive would more likely be to heap malice and contempt upon the dead. Such a practice is in harmony with the gruesome customs of the Assyrians in dealing with the tombs of kings of conquered lands. The classes mentioned as having their bones so treated are the classes who had led in Judah's backsliding.

2. Spread. Doubtless strewn or scattered carelessly, without any show of respect.

The host of heaven. There is irony in this picture. The heavenly bodies mutely witness the desecration of the bones of their worshippers.

Loved. See 2 Kings 17:16; 21:3; Jer. 19:13; Eze. 8:16; Zeph. 1:5. Their devotion had become a mad fervor.

Gathered. That is, for burial.

4. Fall, and not arise. The absurdity of the obstinate persistency of Jerusalem's inhabitants in perverse ways is shown by a contrast with what men ordinarily do. Does a man who slips and falls prostrate lie where he falls without making any attempt to get up?

Turn away, and not return. Is it not also a natural instinct for one who has wandered from the right path to return to it?

6. Rusheth into the battle. The eagerness and mad recklessness of the war horse is a figure of the people's eager and willful plunge to doom (see on Job 39:19–25).

7. The stork. The prophet draws a sharp contrast between the fidelity of the birds to their migratory instincts and the unfaithfulness of man to the laws that govern his being. Palestine lies in the migratory path of certain birds going from Africa northward. Both the white and the black stork are known in Palestine. In their migration these birds pass from the Red Sea northward over the Jordan valley. They stop in Palestine to feed on small water animals along the Jordan and the Sea of Galilee. Few birds are more punctual in their migratory habits.

Appointed times. Heb. *mo'adim*, "appointed places," or "appointed times."

The turtle. That is, the turtledove. Its return was heralded as a sign of the arrival of spring (S. of Sol. 2:12).

The swallow. In its migrations between Africa and Europe this bird passes through Palestine. The more than 200 mi. (320 km.) of fresh water in the serpentine Jordan River makes insect life abundant there in contrast with the Mediterranean coast.

8. How do ye say? The priests and the false prophets are evidently especially addressed (see v. 10; chs. 2:8; 5:31). It was they who boasted of the knowledge and possession of the law in spite of their heedlessness to the divine requirements.

In vain made he it. The false prophets would have none of Jeremiah's instructions, since they regarded themselves as wise and divinely appointed teachers of the people. The priests, too, led the people astray by falsifying the teachings of Holy Writ.

9. What wisdom? Literally, "wisdom of what?" That is, in what respect? The fear of God is the beginning of wisdom (Prov. 1:7; 9:10). The Word of God is the fountain of all wisdom (see Deut. 4:5, 6; Ps. 19:7; 2 Tim. 3:15). But these false religious leaders had no respect for either.

10. Therefore. The punishment and its causes (vs. 10–12) are described in language almost identical with ch. 6:13–15 (see comments there).

Inherit. That is, take possession of them.

12. Were they ashamed? See on ch. 6:15.

13. Surely consume. The phrase thus translated is ambiguous, the other possibility being that it may be derived from the Heb. *'asaph*, which means "to gather." The clause would then read, "I will surely gather." The LXX reads, "They shall gather together." Compare Zeph. 1:2, 3. The translation "I will surely consume" is based on the assumption that the root of the verb is *suph* rather than *'asaph*.

No grapes. Some regard the passage as a threat of crop failure and of scarcity of food. It seems better to understand the language figuratively, as a description of the nation. God's people had become a degenerate, fruitless vine, a barren fig tree, and a withered branch (see Isa. 5:2; Jer. 2:21; Matt. 21:19; Luke 13:7–9).

The leaf. Contrast the picture of the righteous man in Ps. 1:3 with the picture in Jer. 17:8.

Shall pass away from them. The Hebrew of the last clause is obscure. The LXX has no corresponding clause. The Hebrew may literally be rendered, "I will give to them, they shall traverse them." The connection between these two ideas is not clear.

14. Why do we sit still? The prophet dramatically utters words that the terror-stricken people would use in addressing one another.

Gall. Heb. *ro'sh*, a bitter and poisonous plant (see Deut. 29:18; 32:32; Ps. 69:21), possibly the hemlock, the colocynth, the poppy, or the nightshade.

15. Peace. See on ch. 6:14.

Health. Or, "healing."

Trouble. Heb. *be'athah*, "terror," or "dismay" (see ch. 14:19).

16. The snorting. In a dramatic way the prophet describes the arrival of the dreaded invader in the north and the resultant terror.

Dan. A town on the northern border of Palestine (see on ch. 4:15).

Strong ones. Here denoting the war horses (see ch. 47:3).

Are come. Though future, the invasion is dramatically described as already taking place.

All that is in it. Literally, "that which fills it."

17. Cockatrices. Heb. *šiph'onim*. The species of snake referred to is uncertain, but it was doubtless a poisonous variety. The LXX has "deadly serpents" rather than "serpents, cockatrices."

Charmed. Snake charming goes back to very ancient times (see on Ex. 7:11), and is still practiced, notably in India and Egypt. Some serpents presumably do not respond to charming (see Ps. 58:4, 5; see on Eccl. 10:11). The prophet used the figure of such a serpent to represent the implacable nature of the invader. The fury of the enemy could not be appeased or allayed by any art or method.

18. My heart is faint. The Hebrew of the first part of the verse is obscure. It is clear, however, that the heart of the prophet was crushed by the hopeless condition of his people. Chapter 8 closes with an outpouring of Jeremiah's heart-rending anguish because of the impending national calamities.

19. Why? God answers by a counterquestion. Why had the people persisted in idolatry? Their distress was not due to any lack of faithfulness on His part, but to their own disloyalty to their King.

Strange vanities. These foreign images represented gods that were nonentities (see Deut. 32:21; 1 Kings 16:13, 26; Jer. 14:22; Ps. 31:6). The children of Judah had chosen to serve foreign gods; hence Jehovah cast them out into a foreign land.

20. The harvest is past. Some consider this verse a further complaint of the captives; others, a continuation of the prophet's bitter lament for his doomed people. It is, in any case, the lament of failure. In Palestine the grain harvest begins about April. The fruit harvest comes about August or September. When the grain crops failed, there was still

the hope there would be a yield of grapes, figs, olives, etc. For Judah, however, the fruit-gathering season—the last opportunity—had passed, and there was no deliverance. Her doom was now inevitable.

Soon for the world the last summer will come and the last harvest be reaped. Then from the lips of thousands now living complacently will again ascend this wail of despair (see 7T 16).

21. For the hurt. The passage reads literally, “For the breaking ... I am broken” (see ch. 23:9). Jeremiah was crushed by the sense of the utter ruin in store for his people.

I am black. See on ch. 4:28. The prophet puts on mourning (see Ps. 38:6; Ps. 42:9).

Astonishment. Heb. *shammah*, “an awful event,” “a horror” (see on ch. 5:30).

22. Balm. An aromatic resin or gum much prized for its healing properties (see chs. 46:11; 51:8), derived from a small, flowering evergreen tree that grew in the mountainous region east of the Jordan. The product was exported in OT times (see Gen. 37:25; Eze. 27:17). Was there no balm for Israel’s spiritual wounds and no healer to apply it? The answer implied is, “Yes, there is.” The message borne by the prophets, if heeded, would have provided healing.

There is a cure for the disease of sin. Sin may be great, but the Physician of the soul is greater.

Why? The people’s lack of healing was not due to the absence of means to effect a cure, but to the refusal of the nation to come to the Great Physician. Perhaps the people had become insensible to their needs. Perhaps they were too proud to accept the remedy, and thought they could cure themselves. Perhaps they had grown to love the disease. At any rate they would not look to the Healer and live.

Health. Heb. *’arukah*, “healing,” not the same word as the one translated “health” in v. 15. *’Arukah* refers to the new flesh growing on the wounded spot.

The daughter of my people. A common Hebrew idiom implying that the Hebrew nation throughout its history was the “mother,” and the present generation the “daughter.”

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

5 PK 414

7 CT 189; PK 414

11 EW 234; GC 655; 1T 335; 4T 185; 5T 77, 83; see also EGW on Jer. 6:14

20 1T 50; 2T 243; 5T 353, 590; 7T 16; 8T 252; 9T 48

22 CH 536; COL 418; DA 365; PK 119, 719; 6T 230

CHAPTER 9

1 *Jeremiah lamenteth the Jews for their manifold sins, 9 and for their judgment. 12 Disobedience is the cause of their bitter calamity. 17 He exhorteth to mourn for their destruction, 23 and to trust not in themselves, but in God. 25 He threateneth both Jews and Gentiles.*

1. Oh that my head. Logically this verse belongs to ch. 8 and is so placed in the Hebrew Bible. The language here has been appropriately called the poetry of suffering (see Isa. 22:4; Lam. 2:11; 3:48). The hopeless misery of Judah touched the prophet deeply, and he wept bitterly. This verse is doubtless the source of the designation of Jeremiah as the “weeping prophet.” The depth of his feelings and the tenderness of his words remind us of Christ, who wept for the sins and the fate of His doomed people six centuries later (see Luke 19:41–44).

2. A lodging place. Life with the godless and corrupt men of Judah had become so intolerable that Jeremiah longed for the peace and quiet of a life of retirement in some desolate and lonely place (see Ps. 55:6–8).

Adulterers. Both literal and spiritual (see on chs. 2:20; 3:8, 9; 5:7, 8).

3. They bend. Literally, “tread.” The large battle bows were strung by pressing the foot on the lower end while the other end was bent to receive the ox-gut bowstring. The Hebrew for the bow benders of ch. 50:14, 29 is literally, “treaders of the bow.”

Tongues. Their tongue is compared to a bow with which they shoot the arrows of lies at their neighbors (see Ps. 57:4; 58:7; 64:3, 4; cf. Isa. 59:4).

Truth. See on chs. 5:3; 7:28. The LXX renders this clause, “Falsehood and not faithfulness has prevailed.” It was not by the norm of honor and integrity that the people had grown strong and rich in the land, but by craft, fraud, and overreaching.

Earth. Here preferably “land” (see on ch. 4:20, 23).

From evil to evil. There can be no standstill in evil. Sinners progress from one form of wickedness to another (see 2 Tim. 3:13).

They know not. Meaning, “they acknowledge not” (see 1 Sam. 2:12; Job 18:21; Hosea 4:1). This was the root cause of all their evil.

4. Take ye heed. When a nation has departed from the basic principles of true religion, what restraint is there on the lives of the people? The result is an utter collapse of morality (see Micah 7:5, 6). As Jeremiah learned by bitter experience, no one could be trusted, not even those of his own household (see Jer. 12:6; cf. Matt. 10:36).

Will walk with slanders. That is, the neighbor “goes about for talebearing” (see ch. 6:28).

5. Will deceive. The people of Jeremiah’s day deceived not only their avowed enemies but their friends.

Taught their tongue. An intimation of the unnaturalness of their evil. The tongue must be trained in expertness at lying.

Weary themselves. Their ability to do evil is exceeded by their will and desire for it.

6. Thine habitation. A reference either to Jeremiah’s habitation or to that of the people. For v. 6 the LXX reads, “There is usury upon usury, deceit upon deceit; they did not wish to know me.”

They refuse. The people’s ignorance of God was willful (see v. 3; ch. 5:4, 5). Transgression is a matter of choice.

7. Lord of hosts. See on ch. 7:3.

I will melt. To remove the dross, God would put them through the furnace of affliction (see on Jer. 6:27–30; cf. Isa. 48:10). The object of the judgment was purification and not destruction (see Zech. 13:9; Mal. 3:3).

Try. Heb. *bachan*, “to assay” (see on ch. 6:27).

How shall I do? A question justifying the divine course of action (see Isa. 5:4). How else could God treat them under the circumstances?

8. An arrow shot out. Better, “a murderous arrow,” or “an arrow from a strong bow.” In v. 3 their tongue was likened to a bow. Here it is compared with a deadly arrow.

9. Visit. That is, “punish” (see on Ps. 8:4; 59:5).

10. For. “On account of.” This and the following verses describe the sad desolation of the land and its cities, and the exile of its inhabitants.

Mountains. The hillside terraces, once cultivated and fruitful, would become barren.

Habitations. Heb. *ne'oth*, “pastures,” or “abodes.” Though once clothed with flocks, these would become so utterly wasted that even birds could not find subsistence.

Lamentation. Heb. *qinah*, “an elegy,” or “a dirge.” On the poetic peculiarities of the *qinah* see Vol. III, p. 27. Lamentations were sung by such professional mourning women as are mentioned in v. 17.

Cattle. Heb. *miqneh*, often used in a general sense to include all domestic animals, as cows, goats, sheep, horses, asses, and camels.

11. Heaps. Ruins consisting of rubbish and stones (see ch. 51:37).

Dragons. Heb. *tannim*, “jackals” (see chs. 10:22; 49:33; 51:37), not to be confused with Heb. *tannin*, “a sea monster” (Gen. 1:21; Ps. 148:7), or “serpent” (Ex. 7:9, 10).

12. Who is the wise man? Both sage and prophet are now challenged to give the cause of the national calamities (see ch. 8:8, 9).

For what? An explanation of the “this,” earlier in the verse. The question was: “Why has the land been ruined and become a desolate wilderness?”

13. Because. Jehovah Himself now gives the answer to the question posed in v. 12.

Law. Heb. *torah*, which is a broader term than the English “law.” *Torah* means “teaching,” “instruction,” and “direction,” and may be used also for the teachings of the prophets (see Jer. 18:18; 26:4, 5; see on Deut. 31:9; Prov. 3:1).

Therein. The use of the feminine in the Hebrew makes it clear that the reference is to “law” rather than to “voice” (see Deut. 28:15).

14. Imagination. Heb. *sheriruth*, “stubbornness,” which the Hebrew word always means in the Bible (see chs. 3:17; 7:24; 11:8; 16:12; 18:12; etc.).

Baalim. A transliteration of the Hebrew plural for Baal (see ch. 2:8, 23). Instead of teaching them the laws of Jehovah (see Deut. 11:19), their fathers taught them to follow such gods as Baal of Peor (see Deut. 4:3), Baal-zebub of Ekron (2 Kings 1:2), and the Phoenician Baal (1 Kings 16:31, 32). See on Hosea 2:17.

15. Lord of hosts. See on ch. 7:3.

Will feed. Literally, “am feeding.” What is about to happen is pictured as having already taken place.

Gall. Heb. *ro'sh* (see on ch. 8:14). The bitter woes to which the people are about to be subjected are compared with this bitter, poisonous plant (see Jer. 23:15; cf. Deut. 29:18; Lam. 3:19).

16. Scatter them. See Jer. 16:13; 17:4; cf. Lev. 26:33; Deut. 28:36, 64.

Send a sword. Even in the land of exile there will be no rest and no safety (see chs. 42:16; 44:27).

17. Lord of hosts. See on ch. 7:3.

Consider. Or, “behave intelligently.”

Mourning women. Heb. *meqonnoth*, literally, “women who chant a *qinah* [dirge]” (see on v. 10). When death entered a family, mourners were hired to bewail the loss. They emphasized their mournful lamentation by disheveling their hair, rending their clothes, etc. (see 2 Chron. 35:25; Eccl. 12:5; Amos 5:16; Matt. 9:23; Mark 5:38).

Jeremiah pictures the catastrophe to the nation as having taken place, and suggests that the usual honors paid to the dead be carried out.

Cunning. Literally, “wise,” used here in the sense of “skilled” in their art of mourning. They ingeniously recounted the virtues of the deceased, and touched the tender chords in the hearts of the survivors (see ch. 22:18).

19. Spoiled. Heb. *shadad*, “to devastate.”

Confounded. Literally, “ashamed.”

Forsaken the land. Rather, “left the land,” since this was not a voluntary departure.

Cast us out. This clause may also be translated, “They cast down our dwellings.” A slight change in pointing yields the translation, “Our dwellings were cast down.” The language of the KJV must be understood figuratively. The dwellings are represented as spewing out their wicked inhabitants (see Lev. 18:28; 20:22).

20. O ye women. The reference is probably to the hired mourners mentioned in v. 17, though all the women of the land could be addressed.

Teach your daughters. Because of the tremendous increase in the number of deaths (v. 21), the ordinary number of trained mourners would not suffice. It would be necessary for the present mourners to impart their skill to their daughters and neighbors.

Lamentation. Heb. *qinah*, “a dirge” (see on v. 10).

22. As dung. The point of the comparison is in the neglect and contempt with which the bodies would be treated (Jer. 8:2; 16:4; 25:33; cf. 2 Kings 9:37).

Handful after the harvestman. Like the swath of newly cut grain behind a reaper, the stricken would lie thickly, victims of the Grim Reaper. However, there is this difference. Grain was gathered. But these dead would be left where they fell or would be contemptuously trampled underfoot.

23. Glory. That is, “boast,” as the word thus translated is rendered in 1 Kings 20:11; Ps. 52:1; Prov. 27:1; etc. The prophet now points out delusive objects of self-confident boasting. The human devices upon which the people prided themselves would be futile in the day of desolation.

Wisdom. Probably the primary reference is to the wisdom, political sagacity, and human farsightedness of statesmen. However, any trust placed in human wisdom is sheer folly, for it is partial and uncertain (see Prov. 3:5; 1 Cor. 13:9, 10).

Might. Military prowess, armaments, strength of soldiers, material force, etc. All of these are limited.

Riches. Wealth and material possessions constitute no legitimate ground for boasting. “Riches certainly make themselves wings; they fly away” (Prov. 23:5).

24. Glory in this. The truly wise ascribe praise to God alone, never to self (see on v. 23). The knowledge of God is the only true ground for glorying (see 1 Cor. 1:31; 2 Cor. 10:17). That man alone is truly wise in whose heart such knowledge is treasured, for it is life eternal (John 17:3). This knowledge has an intellectual aspect involving the understanding. Man’s relationship to God has a reasonable and intelligent basis. It is no blind discipleship. Man is to serve God with all the mind (Matt. 22:37). But knowing God goes beyond a merely theoretical understanding. It is an experimental knowledge. It is practical. It manifests itself in walking in God’s ways (see Job 22:21; Jer. 22:16).

Lovingkindness. Heb. *chesed*, “divine love” (see Additional Note on Ps. 36). God desires that men become acquainted with His attributes.

Judgment. Heb. *mishpat* (see on Jer. 5:4; Ps. 119:7).

I delight. God takes pleasure in manifesting these moral attributes as well as in seeing them reflected in His children (see Micah 6:8; 7:18).

25. Circumcised with the uncircumcised. Literally, “circumcised in foreskin.” The statement is enigmatical. It may be equivalent to saying “circumcised in uncircumcision” (see on ch. 4:4). The meaning would then be that though the outward rite of circumcision had been observed, there was no corresponding inward purification of heart. The outward sign as a mark of dedication to God was in and of itself of no value unless the heart also was dedicated. The RSV renders the phrase, “circumcised but yet uncircumcised” (see Jer. 4:4; cf. Deut. 10:16; 30:6; Rom. 2:25, 28, 29; 1 Cor. 7:19; Gal. 5:6; 6:15; Col. 2:11).

26. Egypt, and Judah, and Edom. The position of Judah between Egypt and Edom is a mark of degradation.

In the utmost corners. Literally, “clipped on the temple[s],” that is, “having the corners of their hair cut.” Certain peoples, such as the north Arabian Kedar tribe (see on ch. 49:28, 32), had the custom of cutting the hair in a ring around the temples. This practice had a religious significance and was prohibited among the Hebrews (see Lev. 19:27; 21:5). Herodotus (iii. 8) says of the Arabians, “They say that their hair is cut in the same way as Bacchus’s is cut; but they cut it in a circular form, shearing it round the temples.”

All these nations. “These” is a supplied word. Hence the prophet may refer to all the nations of the heathen. Judah was uncircumcised in heart. Consequently that nation had no pre-eminence over the heathen in the sight of God, and could expect the judgments of God.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1 GC 21; 2T 361

1, 2 PK 420

9 PK 415; 7T 89

23 AA 572

23, 24 AA 531; COL 401; CS 340; CT 46, 66; CW 119; FE 352, 376; MH 410; PK 69; TM 96, 258; 3T 550; 5T 737; 6T 148, 257

23–25CW 102; FE 171

24 PK 413

CHAPTER 10

4

1 *The unequal comparison of God and idols.* 17 *The prophet exhorteth to flee from the calamity to come.* 19 *He lamenteth the spoil of the tabernacle by foolish pastors.* 23 *He maketh an humble supplication.*

1. House of Israel. This expression is here used to denote the remnant of the Israelite nation, the kingdom of Judah, rather than the northern kingdom (see on ch. 4:1, 3).

2. Way of the heathen. Primarily the reference is to their way of worshiping, their religion (see Lev. 18:3; 20:23; see on Jer. 4:18).

⁴Nichol, F. D. (1978). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary : The Holy Bible with exegetical and expository comment*. Commentary Reference Series (Je 4:1). Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association.

Signs of heaven. The heathen made astrological calculations based on extraordinary appearances in the sky. Celestial phenomena, such as eclipses, comets, and particular conjunctions of the heavenly bodies, were frequently regarded as indications of national or individual fortunes (see Isa. 47:13).

For the heathen. The reason for the warning is the prevalence and seductive influence of idolatrous religious practices. That idolatry held a fascination for the Israelites is abundantly clear from the frequent warnings against it (see Ex. 23:24, 32, 33; Lev. 18:3; Deut. 7:1–5; Judges 2; 3).

3. Customs. From the Heb. *chuqqah*, “something prescribed,” or “a statute” (see on Ps. 119:5).

Vain. Heb. *hebel*, “vapor,” “breath,” something fleeting and worthless (see on Eccl. 1:2).

Cutteth a tree. The worthlessness of the idols as gods is forcefully demonstrated by calling attention to the origin of these idols (see Isa. 40:20; 45:20).

Workman. Heb. *charash*, “an artificer,” or “a craftsman,” from a verb meaning “to plow,” or “to devise.” In the hands of such a craftsman the forest tree becomes a work of art.

4. They deck it. The carved figure is next adorned with precious metals (see Isa. 40:19).

Fasten it. The idol is nailed to some wall or pillar to make it stand upright and to keep it from falling (see Isa. 41:7).

Move. Literally, “totter.”

5. Upright. Heb. *miqshah*, used elsewhere in the OT only of turned or hammered work (see Ex. 25:18, 31, 36), or of a field of cucumbers (see Isa. 1:8).

Palm tree. Heb. *tomēr*. The word generally denoting a palm tree is spelled *tamar* (Ex. 15:27; Lev. 23:40; Num. 33:9; etc.). It is doubtful whether a palm tree is here intended, especially when the translation “upright” for *miqshah* (see above under “upright”) finds no support. A different interpretation has been suggested, based on a comment in the Apocryphal work, the Epistle of Jeremy, written in the Maccabean period. The Jeremy passage appears to have reference to this prophecy. Verse 70 (v. 69 in the LXX) of this epistle reads, “For even as a scarecrow in a cucumber bed guards nothing, thus are their gods of wood, set in gold and silver.” Inasmuch as the translation “garden of cucumbers” can be supported by Isa. 1:8, it is possible that by the Heb. *tomēr* the prophet meant to designate a scarecrow. This would yield the interesting translation, “They are like a scarecrow in a garden of cucumbers.” A scarecrow in a vegetable garden is stiff, lifeless, and impotent. It is designated to frighten away the birds, but even they may become aware of its impotence.

Speak not. Like scarecrows in a field, idols, though outwardly made to resemble a human being and though standing in a speaking posture, are nought but dumb stocks (see Ps. 115:5).

Must needs be borne. Idols were customarily carried in the grand procession of the gods at the Babylonian religious festivals (see Ps. 115:7; Isa. 46:1, 7).

Go. Literally, “march.” Idols cannot even march in their own processions.

Be not afraid of them. Pagans worship their gods either in the hope that these deities may do them good, or for fear that their deities may harm them. But the prophet declares that these gods are incapable of either hurting their enemies or helping their friends. They can neither reward nor punish (see Isa. 41:23).

6. None like. God is presented as the incomparable One (see Ex. 15:11; Ps. 86:8, 10).

Thy name. God's name stands for His revealed character, His renown, His reputation (see on Ps. 31:3).

7. Fear. See on Ps. 19:9; Prov. 1:7.

King of nations. God's universal sovereignty is declared. Yahweh is more than the God of the Jews (see Rom. 3:29); He is the God of the whole world (see Ps. 22:28; 47:7, 8; 96:10).

Appertain. Heb. *ya'ah*, "to be befitting for." Reverential fear should be given to Yahweh alone; it is not becoming to any other.

All the wise men. The word "men" is supplied and may be omitted. In this way not merely the sages and philosophers of the heathen are indicated, but the gods of the heathen as well—whomever these heathen may have looked to as sources of wisdom (see Ps. 89:6). All worldly wisdom is foolishness in the sight of God (1 Cor. 1:19–31).

8. Brutish and foolish. Idol worshipers are described as dullhearted, unreceptive, gross, and stupid (see on Ps. 115:8; Jonah 2:8).

Doctrine. Heb. *musar*, "chastening," "discipline," or "exhortation." The latter part of the verse reads literally, "the discipline of the vanities, it is wood." By "vanities" the prophet here doubtless meant "idols" (see Jer. 8:19; 14:22; cf. Deut. 32:21; Ps. 31:6). The idols are made of wood, and cannot impart knowledge.

9. Spread into plates. Literally, "beaten out." An outer shell of silver and gold covered the wooden image (see Isa. 30:22; 40:19; Jer. 10:4). The workmanship was entirely the result of human effort.

Tarshish. Literally, "smelting plant," or "refinery." The geographical Tarshish was possibly in the south of Spain at *Tartessus*, where the Phoenicians developed the mineral wealth of Spain (see Eze. 27:12; Jonah 1:3; see on 1 Kings 10:22).

Uphaz. The exact location of this place is unknown. Many have understood it as a variant of Ophir (see on Gen. 10:29; Dan. 10:5).

Founder. Heb. *šoreph*, "a refiner," hence, "a goldsmith," or "a silversmith."

Blue. Heb. *tekeleth*, "a violet-purple wool."

Purple. Heb. *'argaman*, "wool dyed with red-purple."

Cunning men. The makers of the idols were "skilled" artisans (see on ch. 9:17).

10. The true God. Jeremiah here contrasts Jehovah with the false idols, which are merely imaginary gods. God is truth personified (see Ps. 31:5; John 14:6; 17:3; 1 John 5:20).

The living God. In contrast to the lifelessness of idols, God has life in Himself (John 5:26). The source of His existence is in His own being. All other living beings live "in Him" (see Acts 17:28).

Everlasting. In contrast to the powerlessness and temporary existence of all other objects of worship, God is the "king of eternity." His domain is unlimited either by space or by time.

Abide. That is, “to bear patiently,” or “to endure.”

11. Thus shall ye say. This verse is written in the Aramaic language. Only a conjectural reason can be given for this introduction of Aramaic. Inasmuch as the verse seems to interrupt somewhat abruptly the natural flow of the discourse, some suspect an interpolation, either a marginal gloss or perhaps a fragment of some Aramaic Targum. However, another explanation has been offered. Those who hold to the authenticity of the verse propose that the passage may be an answer framed by the prophet in the current language of Babylon to be used when, after the Exile, the Babylonians should invite the Jews to join in idolatrous worship.

Shall perish. In the Aramaic (see above) there is a similarity of sound between the words for “to make” and “to perish.”

12. He hath made. Yahweh alone has the right to claim worship, and that right is based upon the fact that He is the Creator. To Him all other beings owe their existence (see Ps. 96:5). The universe is the product of His creative energy (Isa. 40:22, 26; 42:5; 44:24; 45:12, 18; 51:13). Idols are made, but God makes. He is the Creator. Verses 12–16 of Jer. 10 appear in ch. 51:15–19 with slight variations.

Discretion. Heb. *tebunah*, “understanding.”

13. When he uttereth his voice. The continuous activity of God is exhibited in the phenomena of nature (see Amos 5:8; 9:5, 6). The psalmist, too, saw in the thunderstorm a display of the majestic power of God. He termed thunder the voice of God (see on Ps. 29:3).

Multitude. Heb. *hamon*, “commotion,” “tumult,” and hence “multitude,” or “crowd.”

Vapours. Heb. *nešî'im*, defined as “damp fog,” used in this sense only here and in Jer. 51:16 and Ps. 135:7, which are largely parallel, and in Prov. 25:14, where it is translated “clouds.”

With rain. Literally, “for the rain.”

14. Brutish. Or, “stupid,” “dullhearted” (see on v. 8).

Every founder. That is, “every refiner,” or “goldsmith” (see on v. 9).

Confounded. Better, “ashamed.” The idol upon which the artisan has exhausted his skill remains a lifeless object.

15. Vanity. Heb. *hebel*, “vapor,” or “breath” (see Jer. 10:3; see on Eccl. 1:2).

Work of errors. Literally, “work of mockeries.” Idols themselves deserve only ridicule and mockery, though the sincere belief of even an idolater should not be made a subject of ridicule by a Christian.

Visitation. See on Ps. 8:4; 59:5. In the time when the idol makers will be visited with punishment, the idols will perish (v. 11).

16. Portion of Jacob. Jehovah (see Ps. 16:5; 73:26; 119:57).

Like them. Like the perishable idols made by carpenters and goldsmiths.

Former. From the Heb. *yašar*, “to form” (see on Gen. 1:2), hence meaning “one who forms,” or “one who makes.” Idols are formed by men, but God is the one who formed the universe.

Rod. Heb. *shebeṭ*, primarily “a staff,” “a scepter,” or “a rod.” *Shebeṭ* also came to be used for a company of people led by a leader with a staff (see Ps. 74:2; cf. Ps. 122:4; Isa. 63:17, where *shebeṭ* is translated “tribe”).

Lord of hosts. See on ch. 7:3. This majestic name stands in sharp contrast to all the names of heathen gods.

17. Wares. Heb. *kin'ah*, “a load,” “a pack,” “a bundle.”

Out of the land. Or, “from the land,” here probably meaning the ground.

After the digression in ch. 10:1–16, dealing with the folly of idolatry, the prophecy returns to the subject of ch. 9, namely, the impending desolation of the land and the exile of the inhabitants. In a dramatic way the prophet pictures the departure of the exiles. He admonishes the people hastily to gather a few articles and to prepare for immediate departure to Babylon (see Eze. 12:3).

Fortress. Heb. *maṣor*, “a siege,” or “a besieged place.”

18. I will sling. A figure emphasizing the violence of the expulsion (see Jer. 16:13; cf. 1 Sam. 25:29). Jehovah Himself is the speaker.

At this once. Better, “at this time.” On former occasions the invaders of Jerusalem had retired without success (2 Kings 16:5; 19:35, 36), or had been satisfied with plunder or tribute (2 Kings 14:14).

May find it so. The Hebrew has simply “may find,” with no object expressed. The Syriac version supplies the object “me,” that is, God. The Targums interpret the phrase as “that they may feel it,” that is, the distress (see ASV, RSV). It may be that the prophet purposely left the phrase vague. What they would find would depend upon their own attitude under chastisement.

19. Woe is me. The nation, here personified, is pictured as lamenting her calamity, the ruin of her house and the loss of her children.

Hurt. Literally, “a breaking,” or “a fracture.”

Bear it. To recognize and to accept the affliction that one has brought upon himself by his evil course is the first step in reformation (see Lam. 3:39, 40).

The Jews of Jeremiah’s day rejected outright any suggestion that God’s repeated messages warning of the imminence of captivity could possibly come true (see Jer. 7:3; Eze. 11:3; 12:21–28). Even the devout soul of Jeremiah rebelled, at first, at the thought. He felt deeply wounded (chs. 4:19; 8:21; 15:18), wept (chs. 9:1; 13:17; 14:17), and prayed that captivity might be averted (chs. 7:16; 11:14; 14:11). He was slow to realize that it could not (see chs. 11:11; 14:19).

20. My tabernacle. Better, “my tent,” a figure of Jerusalem or, perhaps, of the whole land of Judah.

My cords. The figure of the tent continues in the prophet’s mind.

They are not. The children were either dead or in exile (see Jer. 31:15; cf. Gen. 42:36).

21. Pastors. Civil rulers (see on ch. 2:8; cf. ch. 3:15).

Shall not prosper. The Hebrew may also be translated, “have not prospered,” or “have not acted wisely.”

22. Bruit. An archaic word for “rumor.” The phrase is literally, “a sound of a report,” or “Hark! News!” The commotion represents the marching of a great army going forth to battle (see chs. 6:23; 8:16).

North country. See on chs. 1:14; 4:6.

Dragons. Heb. *tannim*, “jackals” (see on ch. 9:11).

23. I know. The prophet is the speaker, but he speaks as Israel's representative. Verses 23, 24 constitute a prayer of intercession, with an appropriate confession of sin and a petition for moderation in punishment (see ch. 18:20).

The way. That is, the course of life.

Not in himself. In and of himself man cannot properly determine where and how he should go. He needs divine guidance (see Ps. 37:23; Prov. 16:9; 20:24). The Israelites preferred their own way.

Direct his steps. Man needs divine guidance for each single step. God directs the steps of a good man (Ps. 37:23).

24. Correct me. A confession of wrong and an admission of the need for correction. It is a hopeful sign when the sinner frankly admits the error of his ways and willingly submits himself to needed correction.

Judgment. Heb. *mishpat*, used here in the sense of justice (see on ch. 5:4).

Bring me to nothing. Literally, "make me small."

25. Pour out. Compare Ps. 79:6, 7.

Know thee not. Perhaps better, "did not acknowledge thee." All nations have received a degree of enlightenment (see Rom. 1:18–25; Rom. 2:14–16).

Eaten up Jacob. God permitted the heathen to punish His chosen people. Satan sought to take advantage of the occasion to destroy Israel completely (see Isa. 10:6, 7). The nations exceeded God's permission (Isa. 47:6).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1, 2 FE 171
6, 7 MH 433; PK 97; 8T 281
10 ML 288
10–12MH 413; PP 336
10–13PK 97
10–16FE 172
11, 12 8T 263
13 MH 416; PP 115; 8T 260
14–16PK 98; PP 336
16 MH 413; 8T 263
23 MH 417; 3T 482
23, 24 PK 421

CHAPTER 11

1 *Jeremiah proclaimeth God's covenant, 8 rebuketh the Jews' disobeying thereof, 11 prophesieth evils to come upon them, 18 and upon the men of Anathoth, for conspiring to kill Jeremiah.*

1. The word. See on chs. 1:1; 2:1. This chapter contains a portion of the message given in "the Temple Discourse" (see on ch. 7:1; cf. PK 414). This message was later repeated throughout the whole land of Judah (see ch. 11:6).

2. Words of this covenant. Because of the discovery in Josiah's reign of "the book of the law," the expression "this covenant" assumes a special meaning here (see 2 Kings 22:8 to 23:8). The portion of Holy Scripture that had for many years been lost was presumably the book of Deuteronomy, or at least a portion of it (see PK 392, 393). The book Deuteronomy contained "the book of covenant" (PK 392). Jeremiah's instruction called repeated attention to the counsels given in Deuteronomy (PK 411). The covenant

itself was the one entered into at Sinai (Jer. 11:4; cf. Ex. 19:5; Lev. 26:12). The book of Deuteronomy contained a detailed summary of the conditions of this covenant. It was the work of Jeremiah to direct the attention of the people to the neglected precepts of this book (PK 414).

Cursed. See Deut. 27:26.

Obeyeth. Heb. *shama'*, "to hear," used frequently in the sense "to hearken to," "to heed," or "to obey."

4. Iron furnace. This figure, denoting the harsh servitude of Israel in Egypt, is another reflection of the book of the covenant (see Deut. 4:20).

Obey my voice. See Deut. 11:27; 28:2–14.

5. The oath. For an explanation see Lev. 26:3–13; Deut. 7:8; 8:18.

Flowing with milk and honey. A proverbial expression indicating the plenty of the land of Palestine (see on Ex. 3:8; cf. Deut. 6:3).

So be it. Heb. *'amen*, common expression in Hebrew worship (see Neh. 8:6; Ps. 41:13; 106:48). Our English word "amen" is derived from this root.

6. In the cities. It appears that Jeremiah went from city to city stressing the importance of heeding "the words of this covenant" (see PK 414).

7. Rising early. On the meaning of this idiom see on ch. 7:13.

8. Imagination. Literally, "stubbornness."

The words of this covenant. See Deut. 27; 28.

9. Conspiracy. Heb. *qesher*, emphasizing a binding together. It seemed as though the people with one heart followed a course of spiritual apostasy. The apparently salutary effects of Josiah's wholehearted endeavor to stamp out idolatry were short-lived.

11. I will bring evil. Literally, "I am bringing evil," emphasizing God's resolution to punish the people for their iniquity.

I will not hearken. This does not mean that the Lord would be totally oblivious of the prayers of His people. But when the people would cry for release from the predicted trouble, God would not remove the chastisement. The Lord knew what was best for His people. The discipline was designed to be salutary. Though there was no escape from threatened national calamity, the Lord was as ready and willing to hear any prayer of personal repentance and to grant any plea for individual forgiveness as He had always been. The iniquity of Judah as a whole is indicated in vs. 9, 10.

12. Cry unto the gods. Compare the experience of King Saul. When, because of apostasy, the Lord refused to answer the king's inquiry concerning the outcome of the impending battle, Saul turned to the witch of Endor (see on 1 Sam. 28:6, 7). That the nation as a whole was unrepentant is clearly indicated by the readiness with which the people turned to their false gods.

13. Number of thy cities. For comment see on ch. 2:28.

Shameful thing. Literally, "the shame," shown in the succeeding clause to refer to the image of Baal (see on ch. 2:26). On the revival of Baal worship by Manasseh, son and successor of Hezekiah, see 2 Chron. 33:1–3.

14. Pray not thou. This suggests that in his love for his people Jeremiah had earnestly interceded for them (see on ch. 7:16). Their continued iniquity made this intercession fruitless. They had shown no spirit of repentance, and their cry was nothing more than the expression of their desire to escape chastisement (see on v. 11).

15. Lewdness. Heb. *mezimmah*, literally, “an evil device.”

Many. The Hebrew of this part of the verse is obscure and the grammatical connection of the word for “many” indecisive. Instead of “many” the LXX reads *euchai*, “prayers,” or “vows,” which may be the intended meaning here. The passage would then read, “Why has my beloved wrought abomination in my house? Will prayers and holy offerings take away thy wickedness from thee, or shalt thou escape by these things?” “Holy flesh” apparently designates “hallowed flesh,” that is, “sacrificial flesh.”

16. A green olive tree. Compare Ps. 52:8; Rom. 11:1–24. The word translated “green” denotes luxuriance and abundance of foliage.

17. Planted thee. The one who plants a tree has the right to remove it if it proves unproductive. God had a special plan for ancient Israel (see pp. 26, 27). When the people failed in their divine mission, God removed from them their special rights and privileges (see Matt. 21:33–43; cf. Isa. 5:1–7; Jer. 2:21).

18. Knowledge of it. That is, of their evil deeds. Turning from the sins of Judah and Israel in general, the prophet directs his attention in the rest of the chapter to the “doings” of his own townsmen of Anathoth and their plots to take his life.

19. An ox. Heb. *’alluph*. When used as a noun it means “a friend,” “an intimate” (see on ch. 3:4), or sometimes “cattle” (see Ps. 144:14). As an adjective it means “tame.” Hence instead of rendering the Hebrew of this passage, “a lamb or an ox,” it may be translated, “a tame lamb,” or, “a gentle lamb” (RSV). The LXX renders the expression “an innocent lamb.”

20. Vengeance. Jeremiah appeals to God for justice. Some have felt that his language is somewhat vindictive, but this is not necessarily the case. Jeremiah was conscious of the fact that he was doing the work of the Lord. Any interference with his work was therefore an attack against God (see Vol. III, p. 624).

21. The men of Anathoth. Anathoth had been assigned to the priests (Joshua 21:18) and was the home of Jeremiah (Jer. 1:1). The “men of Anathoth” were therefore priests; even more, they were close relatives of Jeremiah (see ch. 12:6). It had been difficult for Jeremiah to realize the depth of Judah’s apostasy (ch. 11:9–11; see on ch. 10:19). Now, God warns Jeremiah of the secret plot on his life (ch. 11:18, 19, 21), and as the prophet learns of their conspiracy against him personally he begins to understand their attitude toward God (v. 20; see chs. 12:1; 17:18).

Prophecy not. Compare the experience of Amos (Amos 7:10–13), of Jesus (Luke 4:16–30), and of Paul (Acts 9:23; 23:12).

22. Young men. That is, men of military age, as shown by the fact that they would die “by the sword.”

23. No remnant. If the “remnant” refers to those who would return from captivity, the prediction evidently applies only to the men who conspired against Jeremiah, inasmuch as some of the men of Anathoth did return (see Ezra 2:23; Neh. 7:27). On the other hand, the prophet may be referring to the carrying away into exile of all the city’s inhabitants. The fact that Anathoth was near Jerusalem would bring upon it the full force of the Babylonian invasion.

Visitation. The purpose of the visitation is punishment (see on Ps. 8:4; 59:5). Jeremiah employs this expression characteristically to refer to the time divinely appointed

for chastisement of the apostates (see Jer. 8:12; 10:15; 23:12; 46:21; 48:44; 50:27; 51:18).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

2 PK 466
5 1T 203
6 PK 414

CHAPTER 12

1 *Jeremiah, complaining of the wicked's prosperity, by faith seeth their ruin. 5 God admonisheth him of his brethren's treachery against him, 7 and lamenteth his heritage. 14 He promiseth to the penitent return from captivity.*

1. When I plead. Jeremiah appears deeply perplexed over the continued prosperity of the wicked. Though at heart convinced that God is "righteous," he cannot fully harmonize his concept of God with the facts of human experience. Other saints had grappled with the same problem, for example, Job (Job 21:7–13) and David (Ps. 73:1–12; see Introduction to Ps. 73). If, as seems likely, Jer. 12 fits chronologically between chs. 11 and 13, Jeremiah may have still been troubled over the hostility and the conspiracy of the men of Anathoth.

Happy. Literally, "at ease," or "at rest."

2. Planted. See ch. 11:17.

They have taken root. A figure denoting the prosperous state of the wicked.

Their reins. Literally, "the kidneys." These organs were considered to be the seat of the emotions. Hence by "reins" were designated "the inner feelings" (see Ps. 26:2).

3. Thou, O Lord. Confident that God is aware of his sincerity, Jeremiah expects God to vindicate him.

Sheep for the slaughter. See ch. 11:19. Jeremiah requests for his enemies the punishment they intended to inflict upon him.

Prepare. Heb. *qadash*, frequently translated "to sanctify," here evidently meaning "to set apart" (see on ch. 6:4).

4. Our last end. The LXX reads "our ways."

5. Hast run. God asks Jeremiah to compare his small sorrows with the larger troubles of others, or with the larger troubles that would yet come to him.

With the footmen. A figure representing the ordinary vicissitudes of life, as compared with "horses," or "horsemen," representing the more difficult experiences. The ordinary man could be expected to "keep up" with his fellow men. If he should become weary when running with the footmen, how could he face the harder task of keeping up with the horses? The lesson given to the prophet of old may well come home to each one today. If we neglect the minor tasks of life, how can we undertake the greater responsibilities that may come to us? If we succumb to the smaller temptations of everyday life, how can we overcome in the greater crises of life? If we cannot endure the lesser troubles of life, how can we withstand the terrible tribulations that will yet come upon us? And finally, if we fail to meet the situations of the present day with faith and trust, how will we be able to stand the almost unendurable hardships and almost overmastering delusions that will come upon us during the "time of trouble" (see GC 621, 622)?

Swelling. Heb. *ga'on*, "height," "eminence," or "pride." The usual translation of *ga'on* in the OT is "pride." There is some question as to just what is meant by the

expression here, “the pride of the Jordan,” or “the height of the Jordan.” Some consider that the reference is to “the high waters of the Jordan,” denoting the overflowing of the river in harvesttime (see Joshua 3:15; 1 Chron. 12:15). Others are of the opinion that the reference is to “the high trees of the Jordan,” which, with the underlying shrubs and cane, formed a jungle inhabited by lions and other wild beasts (see Jer. 49:19; Zech. 11:3). It matters not whether the “swelling” of the Jordan is the “flood,” or the “jungle,” the contrast is clear between it and the “land of peace.”

6. Thy brethren. Either Jeremiah’s immediate family, or the men of Anathoth, who were Jeremiah’s “brethren” in the sacred office of the priesthood (see on ch. 1:1; cf. ch. 11:23).

Called a multitude after thee. Literally, “cried after thee fully.”

7. Mine house. This expression evidently refers to the Israelites rather than to the Temple, as is indicated by the following clause (see Hosea 8:1; 1 Tim. 3:15; Heb. 3:6). The Lord is undoubtedly the speaker, not Jeremiah.

Left. The Hebrew word used here emphasizes the lack of further attention or care toward the person or thing that is “left.”

9. Mine heritage. In Hebrew this verse is a question, “Is my heritage like a speckled bird to me?” The birds mentioned in v. 9 are birds of prey.

10. Pastors. Literally, “shepherds.” The leaders of the armies of invaders are compared to shepherds, whose flocks despoil the crops (see ch. 6:3).

11. Desolate. The threefold repetition of this idea adds strikingly to the force of the picture.

No man layeth it to heart. An expression denoting indifference, a sin that made more grievous the iniquity of the Israelites (see Isa. 42:25; 57:1, 11).

12. Sword of the Lord. So called because the military might of Babylon under Nebuchadnezzar was the instrument used to carry out the divine purpose in punishing God’s people (see on Deut. 32:41; cf. Isa. 7:20; 10:5, 6).

Peace. See on ch. 6:14.

13. Shall reap thorns. Better, “have reaped thorns.”

Revenues. Heb. *tebu’oth*, “yields,” or “increases,” that is, the harvest of the soil.

14. Mine evil neighbours. The Edomites, Moabites, Amalekites, Philistines, and the other surrounding nations who rejoiced over Judah’s fall and attacked her when she was weak (see 2 Kings 24:1, 2).

I will pluck them. In their captivity these heathen nations will suffer punishment like that of Judah (see ch. 25:15–29).

16. Swear by my name. If a heathen nation would turn to Jehovah, the God of Israel, that nation would “be built in the midst” of His people, that is, be counted as belonging to the Lord. It was God’s purpose that these nations should turn to Him and be added to His people, Israel.

17. Pluck up and destroy. To nations, as well as to individuals, is given a time of probation, and when that time is past, the unrepentant nation will fall under the wrath of God (see PK 364).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1 5T 397

3 FE 348

CHAPTER 13

1 *In the type of a linen girdle, hidden at Euphrates, God prefigureth the destruction of his people.* 12 *Under the parable of the bottles filled with wine he foretelleth their drunkenness in misery.* 15 *He exhorteth to prevent their future judgments.* 22 *He sheweth their abominations are the cause thereof.*

1. Thus saith the Lord. The events of this chapter may be dated with a high degree of probability in 597 B.C., during the three months' reign of Jehoiachin, since, as some think, the queen (mother) is probably mentioned in v. 18 (see comments there), and since Nehushta, Jehoiachin's mother, is frequently mentioned in connection with the reign of Jehoiachin (see 2 Kings 24:6–8, 12, 15; Jer. 22:24, 26; 29:2).

Get. Rather, “buy,” or “acquire.”

Girdle. Heb. *'ezor*, “a loincloth.” The loincloth symbolically represented the Israelites, whom God had closely bound to Himself (see ch. 13:11).

Not in water. A damp, soiled garment would decompose the more readily (see v. 7).

2. Got. Rather, “bought.”

3. Second time. The time interval between the first and second messages is not stated.

4. Go to Euphrates. Inasmuch as at its nearest point the Euphrates River is approximately 330 mi. (528 km.) from Jerusalem, some have questioned whether the actual river is meant, or whether some other geographical location by the same name is referred to. The word for Euphrates, *Perath*, is consistently translated “Euphrates” in the OT. In every case *Perath* is coupled with the word for “river,” except in this chapter, in 2 Chron. 35:20, and in Jer. 51:63. Two journeys to and from the Euphrates River, one to bury the loincloth (Jer. 13:4, 5), and one to recover it (vs. 6, 7), would necessitate the extremely hard and arduous task of traveling 1,400 mi. (868 km.). Some have felt that the importance of the prophecy of this chapter justified such an undertaking. Others have contended that “Euphrates” here refers to some other geographical site, and have offered various explanations for the use of *Perath*. Suggested explanations are: (1) that it was a wadi near Jerusalem not yet identified; (2) that *Perath* was a scribal error for *Parah* (Joshua 18:23), thought to be about 31/4 mi. (5.3 km.) northeast of Anathoth; (3) that it was Paran, in harmony with Aquila's Greek version. The last explanation seems highly unlikely. All the other versions render *Perath* as Euphrates. Though there may be some question as to whether Jeremiah was required to bury the girdle on the banks of the famous river, there is no uncertainty regarding the application of the symbolic prophecy. The girdle represented the house of Israel (Jer. 13:11), and the removal and burial of it, the removal of the people to Babylon.

6. After many days. How long the girdle lay buried is not stated. It was sufficiently long for deterioration to render the garment useless (see v. 7).

7. Marred. Heb. *shachath*, “to spoil,” or “to ruin.”

9. Great pride of Jerusalem. The vain, boastful, arrogant pride arising from the people's sinful, wayward heart. Any blow to the pride of the city would be likely to involve the great object of Jerusalem's pride, the Temple (see on ch. 7:4).

10. Imagination. Literally, “stubbornness.”

11. House of Israel. The symbolism of the prophecy is here explained. The loincloth represented both the house of Israel and the house of Judah.

For a people. God reminds His people of what would have been their lot had they proved loyal to Him and had they been obedient to His will (see Deut. 7:6; 26:18, 19; 28:1, 13; see pp. 25–38).

12. Bottle. Heb. *nebel*, here not a skin bottle (Heb. *no'd*, see on Ps. 56:9), but a large earthen jar or vessel (see Isa. 30:14; Lam. 4:2).

Filled with wine. Not understanding the spiritual import of this unique illustration, the question, “Do we not certainly know that every bottle shall be filled with wine?” was asked by the people partly in astonishment, partly in mockery. Why should Jeremiah tell them what they already knew?

13. Even the kings. Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, and Zedekiah, kings of Judah (see 2 Kings 23:31 to 24:20; Vol. II, pp. 94–98), were all directly involved in the closing events of the southern kingdom. Perhaps the prophet had all of them in mind.

14. Dash them. Spoken of the earthen vessels (see on v. 12). These represent the inhabitants of the land.

15. Be not proud. Pride was Judah’s besetting sin (see v. 9).

16. Give glory to the Lord. That is, do that which a knowledge of God and of His requirements demands. As in the case of Achan (Joshua 7:19), such an act would involve a contrite confession of sin.

Dark mountains. Literally, “the mountains of twilight”; a picture suggesting, perhaps, the gathering gloom and darkness of punishment and despair that the Israelites were soon to experience because of their iniquity (see Isa. 59:9, 10).

17. My soul shall weep. The prophet expresses his tender regard and deep love for his people (see Lam. 1:16; see on Jer. 9:1).

Lord’s flock. By this figure God sets forth His tender relationship to His children (see Zech. 10:3; John 10:1–6).

18. Queen. Heb. *gebirah*, here believed to refer to the queen mother, Nehushta, King Jehoiachin’s (Jeconiah’s) mother (see Jer. 29:2; 2 Kings 24:8). The same word, *gebirah*, is applied to the mother of Asa (see 1 Kings 15:13; 2 Chron. 15:16). That these queen mothers sometimes exerted great influence in the affairs of the kingdom is indicated by Athaliah’s usurpation of the supreme authority (see 2 Kings 11; see on Dan. 5:10).

Principalities. Literally, “head coverings.”

19. The south. Heb. *negeb*, a region in the southern part of Judea (see Vol. I, map facing p. 321).

All of it. The completeness of the approaching deportation is emphasized. The entire country, including the cities of the south, would be involved.

20. From the north. The usual invasion route from Babylon approached Palestine from the north (see on ch. 1:14).

Where is the flock? Zion personified is being addressed, as shown by the gender of the pronoun “thee,” which, in the Hebrew, is feminine. The flock represents the inhabitants of Judah. These, Zion should have tenderly cared for. But she indulged in iniquity and basely neglected the “Lord’s flock” (v. 22).

The question is asked against the background of the invasion already in progress, as indicated by the clause, “behold them that come from the north.” The prophet’s searching question receives no answer. Like the man without a wedding garment, Zion remains

“speechless” (Matt. 22:12). In fact, the question requires no answer. The painful truth is all too evident. The day of probation has passed. The flock is passing into enemy hands.

The same searching question is directed at parents, teachers, and spiritual leaders. God has entrusted precious souls to their care. He will require a strict account of those who are guardians of His flock.

21. *He shall punish.* Doubtless God is referred to (see DA 641).

Hast taught them. The meaning of this sentence is not clear. The antecedent of “them” is uncertain. The general idea is probably that the object of Judah’s trust would fail her.

22. *Are ... discovered.* Literally, “are uncovered.” The removal of the “skirts” was an indication of the deepest degradation (see Isa. 47:1–3; Nahum 3:5). Assyrian reliefs picture captive women suffering this outrage.

Made bare. Literally, “treated violently.” This may mean that they would be compelled to walk barefoot like menial slaves or an outcast harlot (see Isa. 20:2–4).

23. *Ethiopian.* Literally, “Cushite.” These men from the upper Nile (see on Gen. 10:6; see Vol. II, p. 52) were not unfamiliar to the people of Judah (see Jer. 38:10). The figure vividly impressed the sad truth that so firmly fixed was the sin of Judah that its people were not able of themselves to “change” their evil ways. Nothing was left for them but captivity.

May ye also do good. Here is set forth the futility of any human endeavor to overcome evil apart from the power of God (see 1 Kings 8:46; Ps. 130:3; Prov. 20:9; Eccl. 7:20; Rom. 3:9–12; 7:22–8:4; 1 John 1:8–2:2).

24. *Stubble.* Heb. *qash*, the crushed and broken straw found on the threshing floor after the oxen have trampled the grain. This will be blown away by the dreaded hot wind that sweeps in from the Arabian Desert (see on ch. 4:11).

25. *Falsehood.* Probably a reference to the worship of false gods.

26. *Discover thy skirts.* See on v. 22. A figurative expression denoting the uncovering of the people’s “shame.”

27. *Thine adulteries.* A figure representing the idolatrous worship of the Israelites (see ch. 3:20).

Neighings. A figure representing the unrepressed desires and lusting of Judah after idolatry (see ch. 2:24; cf. ch. 5:8).

Clean. The closing part of the verse sets forth the loving hope of the Lord for the Israelites’ spiritual reformation. The wording suggests a hope tinged with plaintive despair because of the persistently unrepentant course of the people.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

17 GC 21

20 DA 641; CG 561; CT 170; FE 223; PP 192; 4T 424; 6T 205

21 DA 641;

MH 346

23 CS 35; Te 286

CHAPTER 14

1 *The grievous famine 7 causeth Jeremiah to pray.* 10 *The Lord will not be intreated for the people.* 13 *Lying prophets are no excuse for them.* 17 *Jeremiah is moved to complain for them.*

1. The word of the Lord. This begins a new prophecy, which is considered by some to extend to ch. 17:18. The message of ch. 14 is undated. However, it has been conjectured that Jeremiah delivered it some time earlier than the latter part of the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim (see ch. 25:1), for nowhere in the chapter is there a hint that the Chaldeans have as yet come against Jerusalem.

The dearth. Or, “the drought” (see ch. 3:3). If the drought described here is to be identified with that mentioned in ch. 3:3, the time of this prophecy would possibly fall in the first decade or so of Jeremiah’s ministry.

2. The gates. In ancient times public life centered at the city gates (see on Gen. 19:1). The decay of the gates represented the disruption of business and other public functions.

3. Found no water. Compare 1 Kings 18:5; Amos 4:7, 8.

Covered their heads. An act displaying grief (see 2 Sam. 15:30; 19:4).

4. Chapt. An Old English form of “chapped.” However, the word thus translated does not mean “chapped,” as we now define that word, but rather “to be stricken with terror.” Poetically, words normally ascribed to human beings are sometimes ascribed to inanimate objects.

5. The hind. The female deer, known for her tender feeling toward her young, abandons it in her desperate, futile search for grass.

6. Dragons. Heb. *tannim*, “jackals” (see on ch. 9:11).

7. Though our iniquities. Because of his love for his people Jeremiah is prompted to pray for their pardon (see on ch. 7:16). In behalf of his people, he willingly confesses their transgressions. The prophet knew that Judah’s apostate spiritual condition had brought the drought upon the people (ch. 3:2, 3).

8. Hope of Israel. Heb. *miqweh Yiśra’el*, an expression occurring only here and in ch. 17:13. The prophet emphasizes the fact that there is no “hope” for Israel except in the Lord.

As a wayfaring man. The prophet’s graphic way of expressing God’s seeming indifference to Judah in their “time of trouble.”

9. Astonied. Or, “astounded,” “perplexed.” The LXX renders the opening clause, “Wilt thou be as a man asleep?”

In the midst. Jeremiah’s conquering faith assures him that God is not, as v. 8 implies, like a passing “wayfaring man” (see v. 8), but that the Lord ever abides loyally among His people. The prophet confidently knows that though the Lord delays action, He, “as a mighty man,” will save His own.

10. Not accept them. Because the people of Judah have not turned from their sinfulness, but have loved to “wander” in the paths of their own transgressions, God must refuse Jeremiah’s request.

Visit. That is for the purpose of punishing (see on Ps. 8:4; 59:5).

11. Pray not. See chs. 7:16; 11:14.

12. I will not accept. The statement has been understood to mean that these fasts and offerings were merely perfunctory, ceremonial acts, without the sincere spirit of true worship (see Isa. 1:10–15), and so unacceptable to God. However, the passage may mean that their fasts and offerings, though in a measure sincere, came too late to avert the divine punishment.

By the sword. So constantly has human history demonstrated the sequence of the scourges of war, that sword, famine, and pestilence have become a proverbial evil trinity (see ch. 21:9).

13. The prophets say. One of the chief reasons for the Israelites' spiritual decadence was the potent evil influence of the many false, corrupt, popularity-seeking prophets who deluded the people into expecting peace. These prophets speciously reasoned that because the Israelites were the people of God's choice, they were secure from all defeat, and that only good would come to them. Because the teaching of these false religious leaders was more pleasing to the ears of the people than the messages given by the true servants of God, the false prophets were regarded with much greater favor than God's appointed spokesmen. The opposition of the false prophets made the tasks of God's messengers extremely difficult (see Isa. 30:8–10; Jer. 5:31; Eze. 13; Amos 3:5–12).

Ye shall not see. In characteristic fashion the false prophets sounded the popular note by denying the three scourges pronounced upon the people by God (see v. 12), promising them the blessings of continued prosperity and "assured peace."

15. By sword and famine. The Lord pronounces upon these deceivers the very disasters they declared would never come.

16. None to bury them. Not to be buried with proper respect and ceremony was regarded by the Jews as a great dishonor (see chs. 8:2; 16:5, 6).

17. The virgin daughter. A poetic personification for Judah, with particular reference to its capital city, Jerusalem (see Isa. 37:22; Jer. 8:21; Lam. 1:15; 2:13).

18. Behold the slain. The prophet foresaw the desolate state of the land because of the Babylonian captivity.

Sick with famine. That is, suffering from the diseases brought by famine, such as malnutritional ailments and other physical weaknesses that spring from the lack of food.

Go about. Or, "make merchandise." The meaning of this clause is somewhat obscure. Some think the passage means that the prophet and the priest would wander around in the land of captivity not knowing where to dwell or where they would be taken next. Others believe it means that these false religious leaders would gain no lesson from the severe experience of the Exile, but would continue to ply their trade during their captivity.

19. Utterly rejected. Here again (see vs. 7–9) love for his country and people causes the prophet to intercede passionately for them. He begins by earnestly expostulating with God as to the reasons for the calamitous conditions.

20. We acknowledge. Jeremiah freely acknowledges the transgressions of his people. Nevertheless, he appeals to the love that God has for His people (see on Ps. 85:10).

21. Thy name's sake. Compare the arguments used by Jeremiah with those advanced by Moses in Israel's behalf (see Num. 14:15–19).

Throne. The throne of God is the symbol of the divine presence. Here the throne seems to denote the city of Jerusalem as the dwelling place of God (see chs. 3:17; 17:12).

22. The vanities. The worthlessness of idols was made increasingly apparent to all during this time of drought (v. 1) by the utter inability of these false gods to cause sorely needed rain (see Isa. 41:29; Jer. 10:3, 8).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

CHAPTER 15

1 *The utter rejection and manifold judgments of the Jews. 10 Jeremiah, complaining of their spite, receiveth a promise for himself, 12 and a threatening for them. 15 He prayeth, 19 and receiveth a gracious promise.*

1. *Though Moses.* Chapter 15 apparently continues unbroken the message of ch. 14. Thus both chapters are probably of the same date. Continuing the debate, as it were, between Himself and Jeremiah (see vs. 1–9), God again declares His rejection of all intercession for the apostate Israelites. Moses and Samuel are doubtless mentioned because they were successful in their pleading with God (see Ex. 32:9–14; Num. 14:11–20; 1 Sam. 7:8, 9; cf. Eze. 14:14).

2. *Such as are.* This classification is doubtless designed to impress upon the people the impossibility of escape.

3. *Four kinds.* The sword is the direct instrument of death. The animals and birds of prey devour the corpses (see Deut. 28:25, 26; 1 Kings 21:23, 24; Jer. 7:33).

4. *To be removed.* Literally, “for a trembling,” or “for a terror,” that is, a people that will be despised by other nations (see 2 Chron. 29:8; see on Deut. 28:25). “Into all kingdoms” is literally, “to all kingdoms.”

Because of Manasseh. The recent and evil reign of this wicked king (see 2 Kings 21:1–18) was still fresh in the minds of the people. The persistence of the people in following the example of this evil king was the cause of their present distress. The mention of righteous King Hezekiah emphasized the contrast in character between father and son.

6. *Repenting.* See on Gen. 6:6, 7. Patience has reached its end for the sinners of Judah, even as it did for the antediluvians.

7. *A fan.* Heb. *mizreh*, “a winnowing fork,” used to toss the grain into the air so the wind would blow away the chaff (see Ps. 1:4; Matt. 3:12).

Gates. See on ch. 1:15.

Since. There is no corresponding word in the Hebrew. By the omission of “since,” the force of the passage is strengthened.

8. *Their widows.* The war with the invaders is pictured as bereaving the women of their husbands.

The mother. The thought evidently is that since the fathers have been slain, the older women are left to trust in the valor of their sons. However, all is in vain; defeat is inevitable.

Noonday. Perhaps the hour when the “spoiler” would be least expected, the time when most armies rested (see on ch. 6:4).

City. The common Hebrew word for city, *‘ir*, also means “excitement.” Though the latter meaning is quite rare, it fits in better with the context here. Thus these closing words may read literally, “I have suddenly caused to fall upon her excitement and terrors.” The LXX reads, “I have suddenly cast upon her trembling and anxiety.”

The Rival Empires in Jeremiah’s Time



9. **Borne seven.** The birth of so many sons indicated ample provision for the future.

Her sun is gone down. Undoubtedly a figure expressing the grief of the mother at being left “ashamed and confounded” because of her lack of sons and heirs (see Gen. 16:4; 30:1, 23; Isa. 54:4; see on Ruth 4:15).

10. **Woe is me.** Contemplating the effects of his message the prophet suddenly senses that his mission, like that of Christ, is “not to send peace, but a sword” (Matt. 10:34).

Usury. See on Ex. 22:25. Both evasive debtors and exacting creditors were objects of cursing. Being neither borrower nor lender, Jeremiah seems deeply hurt by the fact that he was looked upon by all as “a man of strife and a man of contention.”

11. **The Lord said.** The Hebrew of this verse is obscure. This difficult passage may be loosely translated, “The Lord said, Surely I will afflict thee for thy good; surely I will cause the enemy to entreat thee in the time of evil and in the time of trouble.” The meaning appears to be that God is offering comfort to the prophet by giving him the promise of deliverance from his enemies.

12. **Shall iron.** Various interpretations have been given of this “iron” in its relationship to the stronger “northern” iron:

⁵Nichol, F. D. (1978). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary : The Holy Bible with exegetical and expository comment*. Commentary Reference Series (Je 10:1). Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association.

1. It was God's way of indicating that Jeremiah's prayer, however strong in intercession (see chs. 14:7–9; 19–22), could not change the divine purpose to punish the people for their transgressions.
2. It was a representation of Judah's inability to resist the "northern iron" of the Chaldeans' all-conquering strength.
3. It represented the weakness of Pharaoh-Necho of Egypt in the south, upon whom the Israelites counted to check the Babylonian advance, as compared with the military might of Nebuchadnezzar invading from the north.
4. It represented the lack of power on the part of the enemies of Jeremiah to withstand the prophet's divine commission, which power is likened to the harder "northern iron."
5. It represented Jeremiah's impotence to overcome the confirmed and obdurate evil of the people who had the hardness of "northern iron."

Steel. Heb. *nechosheth*, "copper," or "bronze."

13. Thy substance. Apparently these words are addressed to Jeremiah as the people's intercessor and, therefore, their representative.

Without price. A figure indicating complete abandonment. Tragically, God was forced to relinquish His people because of their sins, as men freely give away that which is worthless.

14. To pass. A number of Hebrew MSS read "serve" rather than "pass." "Into" may also be read "in."

15. Remember me. In vs. 15–18 Jeremiah pours out the intense feelings of his soul. On the surface, the language employed by the prophet may seem vindictive, but that is not necessarily the case (see Vol. III, p. 624). Jeremiah was pleading for justice to be done.

16. Thy words were found. Perhaps he had in mind his call as God's spokesman (see ch. 1:1, 2). He would accordingly relate the great experience that came to him from his communion with the Lord. His feeding on the divine words brought "joy and rejoicing" to his heart; and those words became to him "sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb" (see Ps. 19:10). Compare the experience of Ezekiel (see on Eze. 3:1, 3).

Called by thy name. The clause reads literally, "thy name has been called upon me." Jeremiah recognized that he had been adopted into the family of heaven and that he now bore the family name (see Eph. 3:15). On this basis he made his appeal for protection from his enemies (Jer. 15:15).

Lord God of hosts. See on ch. 7:3.

17. Mockers. Rather, "jesters," or "merrymakers."

Alone. Evidently from the time of his call Jeremiah had had little of social enjoyment. As a man set apart by God he found no pleasure in fellowshiping with merrymakers.

Because of thy hand. The prophet had lived an abstemious life because of the divine requirements. However, his self-denial had not always been cheerfully undertaken. At times feelings of resentment and indignation filled his soul. Compare the experience of Ezekiel (see on Eze. 3:14).

18. As a liar. Heb. *kemo 'akzab*. The ancient versions, the LXX, Old Latin, and Syriac read "as deceitful water." This has led many scholars to believe that the Hebrew should be *keme 'akzab*, "like waters of deceit," that is, waters that fail or dry up, thus deceiving the one who comes expecting water. Many of the streams, or wadies, of

Palestine that are filled with a rushing torrent in winter are dry in summer (see on 1 Sam. 17:3).

19. *If thou return.* This implies a rebuke of the prophet's attitude. The Lord assures Jeremiah that if he resumes his right attitude, "then will I bring thee again." The prophet would be permitted to "stand before" the Lord in the full meaning of that term. He would be directed to continue his office as God's spokesman (see 1 Kings 17:1; 18:15).

If thou take forth. As God's spokesman, Jeremiah must know how to distinguish between "the precious" and "the vile," between the gold and the dross, not only in the people to whom he ministers, but also in himself.

Let them return. While some of the people would hearken to Jeremiah, and so "return unto" him by obeying his instruction and ascending to his plane of spiritual experience, the prophet must not allow any godless opposition or any thought of failure to tempt him to "return" to the people by compromising his mission in order to secure their favor.

20. *I will make thee.* The Lord sought to encourage Jeremiah by giving him these precious promises. However, the Lord also saw fit to reveal to His servant some of the prophet's future hardships. In vs. 20, 21 the Lord forewarned Jeremiah that the "wicked" would "fight" against him (see PK 419). Thus the severe persecutions Jeremiah experienced in his later ministry were not unexpected, and, forewarned, he was better prepared to meet them.

Brasen. That is, "of bronze." The alloy we now call brass was not known in Jeremiah's time. The figure of a fortified "brasen wall" is comparable to that of the "fortress" (see on ch. 6:27) to which the prophet was likened.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1, 2 PK 415

16 CSW 43; DA 386; Ed 252; ML 26; 6T 52, 153, 393; 7T 195

20, 21 PK 419

CHAPTER 16

1 *The prophet, under the types of abstaining from marriage, from houses of mourning and feasting, foresheweth the utter ruin of the Jews, 10 because they were worse than their fathers. 14 Their return from captivity shall be stranger than their deliverance out of Egypt. 16 God will doubly recompense their idolatry.*

1. *The word of the Lord.* See on ch. 14:1.

2. *Not take thee a wife.* This prohibition doubtless came early in the prophet's life, for Hebrew youth generally married at an early age (see on Gen. 38:1; 2 Kings 22:1; 23:36; see Vol. II, p. 151). The reason for this prohibition is indicated in Jer. 16:3, 4. Both parents and children were soon to suffer the most tragic fate. Jeremiah's unmarried state was thus a sign to that rebellious generation. Compare Isa. 8:18; Eze. 24:24, 27. The conduct of the work of God often requires personal sacrifices (Luke 14:26; see on 1 Cor. 7:29).

4. *Grievous deaths.* Literally, "deaths of diseases"; perhaps referring to those caused by pestilence or famine (see ch. 14:18) in contrast with those caused by the sword.

Not be lamented. Inasmuch as the Jews regarded funeral observances and ceremonies as very important, to neglect them was a great dishonor (see chs. 9:20–22; 14:16).

5. *House of mourning.* The LXX reads "mourning feast." This prohibition emphasized further the seriousness of the troubles that were to come upon Judah (see Eze. 24:15–27; see on Lev. 10:6, 7).

My peace. No greater affliction could come upon the people of Judah than this, for God's "peace" comprehended all other blessings as the full expression of the Lord's "lovingkindness and mercies" (see John 14:27; see on Jer. 6:14).

6. Not be buried. See on v. 4.

Cut themselves, ... make themselves bald. These heathen practices "for the dead" were forbidden in the law (see Lev. 19:28; 21:5; Deut. 14:1; cf. Jer. 7:29). Evidently the Israelites had adopted these customs, probably following them with increasing frequency during the reigns of Ahaz and Manasseh (see Jer. 41:5; Micah 1:16). Of the two evils, the shaving of the crown of the head was probably more commonly practiced.

7. Tear themselves. In this passage the LXX reads, "Thou shalt not break bread in mourning for them," a reading supported by two Hebrew MSS and adopted by some English versions. If the reading is correct the reference here is probably to funeral meals.

8. The house of feasting. Not only was Jeremiah to avoid the place of mourning (see v. 5); he was also to refrain from attending any social occasion of gladness or merriment. In the solemn awareness of his solitary mission he was to remain aloof from such gatherings.

9. I will cause to cease. See chs. 7:34; 25:10; 33:11.

10. What is our iniquity? Another instance when the apostates out of their spiritual obtuseness or hypocritical surprise inquire why God's judgment should come upon them (see chs. 5:19; 13:22). Blinded to the reality and depth of their own iniquity, they could not see that they were worse than others, and found spurious yet soothing comfort in the comparison. Ever did they cling to the forms of true worship and trusted in the Temple (see on ch. 7:4).

12. Imagination. Literally, "stubbornness."

13. Serve other gods. Since persistently God's people were determined to serve foreign gods in their own land, in righteous retribution the Lord would place them in the land of these gods to serve them there.

14. Shall no more be said. So much more vivid in their remembrance would be the Babylonian captivity than the Egyptian bondage that, when the exiles returned, they would think of their deliverance from Babylon rather than their exodus from Egypt as the outstanding manifestation of divine mercy and power.

15. Land of the north. That is, Babylon (see on ch. 1:14).

16. Many fishers. A figure of the Babylonian invaders, who would surround Judah and Jerusalem as with a dragnet allowing no one to escape (see Amos 4:2; Hab. 1:15).

The figure of fishers is also employed in a good sense. Jesus likened the kingdom of heaven to a "net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind" (Matt. 13:47). He called upon His disciples to be "fishers of men" (Matt. 4:19). The true evangelist is described as one who "hunts and fishes for men" (Ev 116).

Hunters. Another figure of the invaders, perhaps emphasizing the thought of searching out the individual Israelite for capture or death, whereas the "fishers" illustrates the taking of the Jews as a whole in the net of the military campaign.

18. I will recompense. Just as in the Mosaic law a restitution, or fine, sometimes equivalent to twice the amount of wrong committed, was frequently the measure of punishment (see Ex. 22:4, 7), so here God warns Judah that their chosen course of iniquity can but lead to full recompense.

19. My refuge. The prophet entertains a hope and confidence as to what God will do in the future. This suggests to him a view of what the Lord was willing to do for the citizens of foreign nations who would turn to Him (see pp. 29, 30). The LXX fittingly renders the closing part of the verse, “How vain were the idols which our fathers procured to themselves, and there is no help in them.”

21. They shall know. See on Eze. 6:7.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

16 Ev 116

21 GC 287

CHAPTER 17

1 *The captivity of Judah for her sin. 5 Trust in man is cursed, 7 in God is blessed. 9 The deceitful heart cannot deceive God. 12 The salvation of God. 15 The prophet complaineth of the mockers of his prophecy. 19 He is sent to renew the covenant in hallowing the sabbath.*

1. A pen of iron. A stylus, or graving tool (see Job 19:24).

A diamond. Heb. *shamir*, “emery,” “adamant,” or “flint.” This was not the diamond as we know it, but a sharp stone set in iron for engraving use. The word is rendered “adamant” in Eze. 3:9; Zech. 7:12. It is employed here to show that “the sin of Judah” was deeply and ineradicably stamped “upon the table of their heart” (see 2 Cor. 3:3).

Upon the horns. Most likely the horns of the altars of their idolatrous worship. For a description of the horns on the ancient altar see Ex. 27:2; 29:12.

2. Whilst their children remember. Brought up in an environment of idolatry, the children would be inclined to adopt the same wicked course.

Groves. Heb. *’asherim*. Asherah was the name of a Canaanite goddess, worshiped with licentious rites, whose symbol was a tree or wooden post (see on Judges 3:7; see Vol. II, p. 39).

Green trees. While the Asherah was not a grove of trees, the shrine of this heathen goddess was generally connected with one, just as the “high hills” were associated with heathen altars (see Deut. 12:2, 3; Isa. 57:7).

O my mountain. The Hebrew of this phrase is obscure. Many of the ancient versions consider the phrase an adverbial modifier, simply indicating the place where the idolatries were carried on, namely, in the mountains. Compare the reading of the RSV.

Give thy substance. An allusion to the spoils that the invading Babylonians would take from Jerusalem, especially from the Temple (see 2 Kings 24:10–16).

4. Discontinue. Heb. *shamat*, “to let loose,” “to let drop,” or “to let fall,” indicating the surrender of Judah’s “heritage” to the Chaldeans. Since *shamat* also has the meaning of leaving the land untilled, or allowing it to “rest” (see Ex. 23:10, 11), the country of Judah, because of its coming captivity, would “rest,” and “enjoy her sabbaths” (see Lev. 26:32–34; 2 Chron. 36:21).

Fire. See Deut. 32:22.

5. Cursed. Realizing that much of the trouble experienced by his nation was caused by its alliances with Assyria and Egypt, which indicated a transference of their trust for safety and peace from the Lord to the “arm” of man, the prophet, with spirited abruptness, denounces those responsible for this deceptive confidence.

Be the man. The Hebrew word for “man” here is *geber*, “a young, vigorous man” (see on Ps. 34:8).

Trusteth in man. The Hebrew word for “man” here is *’adam*, “man [in the generic sense],” that is, “a person,” “one belonging to the human race.” Here “man” signifies one who is merely a human being, thus aptly signifying that the nations upon whom the Israelites relied for help were after all but human, having the weaknesses common to all mankind. The prophet’s message has significance for our day. How easy it is for men to seek human sources of help and guidance rather than to rely upon what God has promised!

6. Heath. Heb. *’ar’ar*, “shrub,” denoting probably the “juniper.” A forceful figure of desolation and barrenness. In such a forlorn, dreary condition, entirely apart from the blessings that might have been his, the man who trusts in humanity “shall not see when good cometh.”

Salt land. This striking figure would immediately call to mind the desolate shores of the Dead Sea, barren because of the salt content of the water and soil.

7. Blessed is the man. Here we have the opposite of “cursed be the man” in v. 5.

8. As a tree. Similar to the words of the psalmist (see on Ps. 1:3).

Shall not see. The LXX reads “shall not fear.” “Planted by the waters,” and consequently receiving plenty of moisture, this flourishing tree is not concerned by the coming of a “drought.” So it is with the righteous, who receive strength for every trial because of their trust in God.

9. Deceitful. Heb. *’aqob*, from the root *’aqab*, “to seize at the heel,” “to beguile.” Here is the disclosure of the tragic reason that leads unregenerate man to choose to be a barren “heath” (v. 6) in the desert of sin rather than to be a fruitful “tree planted by the waters” (v. 8) of redemptive life. That reason is man’s own unregenerate, sinful nature (see Job 15:14; Ps. 51:5; 58:3; Eccl. 9:3; Rom. 7:14–20; Eph. 2:3).

Desperately wicked. Literally, “incurable,” that is, without any ability to heal its own evil (see Jer. 13:23; Jer. 30:12, 13; Matt. 9:12, 13).

10. Reins. Literally, “kidneys,” as representative of the inner man, the hidden motives (see on Ps. 7:9). God will judge “every man according to his ways” (see Matt. 16:27; Rom. 14:12; 2 Cor. 5:10; Rev. 22:12). Not only will the judgment deal with a man’s deeds; it will also take into consideration the “fruit,” the influence, of man’s deeds upon others, both in life and in death.

11. As the partridge. The Hebrew of the first part of the verse is obscure. Some believe the passage refers to a belief of the Jews that the partridge added to her own eggs those stolen from other birds, and that when the young of these stolen eggs were hatched they left her. Perhaps Jeremiah employs this belief to illustrate the experience of the covetous man, whose greed causes him to pile up riches that are not truly his, and that sooner or later “make themselves wings” and disappear (see Prov. 23:5).

12. A glorious high throne. See on ch. 14:21.

14. Heal me. Compare chs. 3:22; 30:17; 33:6. The prophet knows the One who alone can heal his sinful heart (see Ps. 6:2; 30:2; 103:1–3).

Thou art my praise. See Deut. 10:21; Ps. 71:6.

15. Let it come. The ironical, mocking words of the unrepentant Israelites in response to Jeremiah’s forewarnings of judgments. It would seem that the people felt quite secure,

and had no concept of their future troubles. This is another indication that this series of messages was early in the prophet's ministry (see on chs. 14:1; 15:1; 16:2).

16. I have not hastened. Some have interpreted this declaration of Jeremiah as indicating that he had not been quick to leave his work as a shepherd to carry out God's commission as a prophet (see Amos 7:14, 15), assuming that before his call he tended his flocks in Anathoth and "her suburbs" (see 1 Chron. 6:60). However, the Hebrew of this passage is somewhat obscure and may be otherwise understood. Another possible meaning is that Jeremiah had not withdrawn from following God as a spiritual shepherd. A third possible interpretation is that reflected in the RSV (see below under "Pastor").

Pastor. Heb. *ro'eh*, "shepherd." Some believe that the word should be read *ra'ah*, "evil," which is the reading of the Syriac and of the Greek translations of Aquila and Symmachus. Thus the RSV renders this clause, "I have not pressed thee to send evil."

Neither have I desired. The prophet is protesting that because he had no desire to see "the woeful day" of divine judgment, which he predicted would come upon his people, he was not too eager to be God's spokesman.

18. Be confounded. See on Ps. 35:4.

Double destruction. Literally, "double breaking" (see on ch. 16:18).

19. Thus said the Lord. Here we begin a new line of prophecies having no direct connection with what has gone before. This message was probably delivered sometime after the messages recorded in chs. 14 to 17:18, and probably sometime before the Temple Discourse (see on ch. 7:1; see also PK 411).

21. Thus saith the Lord. This and the following verses show that Sabbath desecration was carried on in Jerusalem, particularly in the city's "gates" (see on Gen. 19:1; Joshua 8:29).

Burdens. See a similar record of Sabbath-breaking in Neh. 13:15–22. These burdens may have included the grain, wine, fruits, fish, and other articles of trade that were brought into the city from the country by those coming to the Temple to worship. Also included were the wares of the city, which were sold on the holy day of rest. Thus the picture presented is that of a loose Sabbath observance, a practice most distasteful to God (see Isa. 56:2–6; cf. ch. 58:13, 14).

25. This city. It would be difficult to find any scripture that sets forth more certainly the high importance of Sabbath observance. Had the Jews been loyal to God's law, and especially to the Sabbath commandment, unlimited blessings would have been theirs.

In chariots and on horses. Symbols of kingly pomp (1 Kings 4:26; Zech. 9:9, 10).

Remain for ever. On the glorious destiny that might have been Jerusalem's see DA 577; cf. PK 46, 564, see also pp. 29, 30.

27. Not hearken. That the failure of the Israelites to observe the Sabbath did bring this tragic result is witnessed in 2 Kings 25:9.

Quenched. Not that the fire would burn without ceasing, but rather that the "fire" of God's retributive justice could not be extinguished until it fully accomplished the divine purpose. Jerusalem was destroyed by fire both by the Babylonians, in 586 B.C., and by the Romans, in A.D. 70; and in both cases no human efforts were able to stop the conflagration until its appointed work of destruction was completed.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

- 5 CW 34, 164; DA 414; FE 501; LS 323; MH 486; PK 329; TM 106, 313, 350, 367, 375, 380, 464, 480, 487, 494; 2T 130; 5T 195; 7T 178, 213; 8T 145, 162

5, 6 COL 201
 5–8FE 172, 372, 441
 5–10FE 223
 7 MH 286
 8 GC 602
 9 CH 456; COL 159; PP 688; 1T 188, 482; 3T 253, 336; 5T 194, 332
 9, 10 2T 512
 10 3T 191; 5T 494
 11 Ed 143
 12 PP 34
 13 3T 186, 464; 5T 371
 13, 14 FE 172
 19, 21, 22 PK 411
 21–25GC 19
 24, 25 DA 577; PK 411, 564
 25 PK 46
 27 PK 412

CHAPTER 18

1 *Under the type of a potter is shewed God's absolute power in disposing of nations. 11 Judgments threatened to Judah for her strange revolt. 18 Jeremiah prayeth against his conspirators.*

1. The word. This message is undated. However, there seems to be a close connection between ch. 18 and ch. 19, and thus the date of this message would probably be 605/04 B.C. (see on ch. 19:1).

3. The wheels. Literally, “the two wheels.” Certain ancient wheels were constructed with two stone discs revolving one above the other. The lower one was for the purpose of propelling the machine with the feet; the upper one held the lump of clay that the potter's hands fashioned as it revolved.

4. Marred. Literally, “ruined” (see on ch. 13:7).

He made it again. That is, he remolded it into another vessel.

6. Cannot I do with you? God here speaks to Israel, not as individuals and not with respect to personal salvation, but as a nation and in terms of its covenant relationship with Him (see v. 7). All God's dealings with Israel in ages past had been based on the call of Israel to serve as the custodian of His revealed will (Rom. 3:1, 2) and to be His special instrument for the salvation of the world (Gen. 12:1–3; Deut. 4:6–9, 20; 7:6–14; see pp. 26, 27). God had clearly set before His people the fact that strict obedience on their part was prerequisite to His blessing them and making them a blessing to others (Deut. 28:1–14), and that disobedience would inevitably bring a curse and the eventual rejection of Israel as His chosen nation (Deut. 28:15, 63–66). Here, through Jeremiah, God reaffirms what He had already spoken through Moses, and adds a warning that disobedience on their part will invalidate the promises of blessing, and the assurance that sincere repentance will render the threats of rejection ineffective (Jer. 18:7–10). For a statement of the principles on the basis of which God deals with nations, see on Dan. 4:17; see also on Ex. 9:16, 17.

As the clay. As a nation Israel had voluntarily entered into the covenant relationship (Ex. 19:3–8 (24:3–8)). In so doing they accepted God as their King (see 1 Sam. 8:7), to

direct the affairs of the nation in such a way as to accomplish the salvation of the world through them (see John 4:22; see pp. 26–30). By virtue of their own choice in the matter they became as clay in the hands of the potter. In the days of Jeremiah the “clay was marred in the hand of the potter” (Jer. 18:4), and, as master potter, God would have been justified in discarding them as a nation. But in mercy He was willing to reclaim the worthless clay vessel and to make “it again another vessel” (v. 4). All that had been promised might yet come to pass if they would only learn to love and serve God (Zech. 6:15; cf. Isa. 54:7; Eze. 36:11; 43:10, 11; Micah 6:8; Zech. 10:6; see also pp. 31, 32).

7. To pluck up. In words that must have reminded Jeremiah of his call to prophetic ministry (ch. 1:10), God affirmed that the destiny of all nations is in His hands (see Ps. 103:19; Dan. 2:20, 21; 4:25).

8. Turn from their evil. The profound truth is here taught that this is a moral universe, and that nations stand or fall according to their relationship to the moral law. If a nation conducts its affairs uprightly, following the precepts of justice and mercy, it “shall prosper” (Ps. 1:3). If, on the other hand, it becomes tyrannical, gives itself wholly to the material and secular values of life, and disregards the norms of honest national and international dealing, it “shall perish” (see Ps. 1:6). There was still time for Judah to repent.

I will repent. See on Gen. 6:6; Joel 2:13.

10. Of the good. The Jews were not to think that their role as God’s chosen people assured them of continued divine favor, irrespective of whether or not they acted in harmony with the divine will.

11. Frame Heb. *yašar*, “to form” (see on Gen. 1:1). The word translated “potter” in this chapter is from this root. God is shaping judgment against His people. However, there is still time to “return ... every one from his evil way.”

12. There is no hope. This reply was not actually spoken by the people of Judah, but was the Lord’s representation of what the people were saying in heart and in action. These words are to be understood as expressing, not an attitude of despair, but rather one that defiantly rejects God’s overture of mercy in the previous verse. It is as if the apostates said, “Do not entertain the hope that we will do as you wish” (see ch. 2:25).

Imagination. Literally, “stubbornness.”

13. Ask ye now. See ch. 2:10, 11. Tragically enough, while the heathen had been loyal to their false worship the Israelites had been untrue to God.

Virgin. Heb. *bethulah* (see on Isa. 7:14). This word sets forth strikingly the shame of Israel’s spiritual adultery (Jer. 14:17; Eze. 16).

14. Will a man leave? The clause may be translated, “Will the snow of Lebanon leave the rock of the field?” The thought conveyed is that the Lord’s strength, in which His people should have trusted, is like the unfailing snow of Lebanon.

Be forsaken. Literally, “be plucked up,” that is, be dried up. The streams of much-desired cold water that flowed from distant or foreign heights were never dried up.

15. They have caused them. A reference to the false prophets and teachers who have led the people astray (see ch. 14:13–18).

From the ancient paths. The same as “their ways” just mentioned (“from” is not in the Hebrew), referring to the time-honored faith of the patriarchs (see on ch. 6:16). Leaving the broad “paths,” or ways, to walk in the smaller side “paths” (different in Hebrew from the first “paths”), how could Judah expect to do otherwise than “stumble”?

16. Desolate. Literally, “a horror.” The coming invasion would cause extreme depopulation. Since “astonished” comes from the same Hebrew root, it is better translated “horrificed.”

A perpetual hissing. An idiomatic way of expressing continued derision.

Wag his head. Better, “shake his head”; not in scorn, but in sympathy for the desolate condition of the land.

17. East wind. The dread scorching, oppressive, dust-filled wind from the desert (see on Jer. 4:11; cf. Ps. 48:7; Jonah 4:8).

Shew them the back. Since the light of God’s “face” was the fullness of joy and peace (see Num. 6:25, 26), to turn away His countenance meant to be left in the shadows of misery. Here it was done in righteous retribution toward those who had turned their back upon the Lord (see Jer. 2:27).

18. Come. The pointed messages of the prophet aroused the sullen hostility of the people, which broke out in open hatred, and they sought to kill Jeremiah (see ch. 11:21).

For the law shall not perish. In self-deception the people believed that the popular priest and prophets had given them sufficient instruction in the law, and that they could trust in this instruction despite Jeremiah’s warnings of the coming crisis. It is likely that the condition revealed in this verse provided the background for the conspiracy of Pashur (see ch. 20:1–3).

20. Dugged a pit. A graphic figure representing the prophet’s enemies as so resentfully hostile to him that they would trap him in a pit like a wild beast.

My soul. Used idiomatically for “me” (see on Ps. 16:10).

I stood before thee. Here referring particularly to the prophet’s unsuccessful entreaties for his people (see chs. 14; 15). The Apocryphal (and semihistorical) book of 2 Maccabees makes this interesting observation regarding Jeremiah’s prayers of intercession: “Then Onias answered, saying, This is a lover of the brethren, who prayeth much for the people, and for the holy city, to wit, Jeremias the prophet of God” 2Macc. 15:14).

21. Deliver up their children. For an explanation of the seemingly vengeful tone of vs. 21–23 see on imprecatory psalms, Vol. III, p. 624.

22. Let a cry be heard. When the people rejected God’s offers of mercy, there was nothing to do but to let Jerusalem be taken by the Babylonians, who would inflict upon its citizens an invader’s cruelty (see 2 Kings 8:12; Hosea 13:16). The Assyrian sculptures that have been preserved reveal all too plainly the terrible fate that awaited prisoners of war in those ancient times.

Snares. Those used by bird hunters (see Ps. 140:5; 142:3).

23. Forgive not. See on v. 21.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

3–6MH 471

6 8T 186; 9T 181

11–158T 70

12–15FE 223

14 CT 358, 373; FE 186, 434; 6T 164

14, 15 FE 170, 371

CHAPTER 19

Under the type of breaking a potter's vessel is foreshadowed the desolation of the Jews for their sins.

1. Thus saith the Lord. Since there are many points of similarity between this chapter and ch. 7, many commentators have assumed that the two discourses Jeremiah here delivers belong to the early part of Jehoiakim's reign. The close connection between the events of this chapter and those of chs. 25, 20, and 36 respectively, indicates that the events of ch. 19 likely occurred during the fourth year of Jehoiakim, probably 605/04 B.C. (see PK 432).

Go and get. Literally, "Go and buy."

Ancients. Literally, "elders," that is, the senior representatives of both civil and ecclesiastical leaders.

2. The valley. The Valley of Hinnom was located south of Jerusalem (see maps, Jerusalem in Israelite Times, Jerusalem Region; see on ch. 7:31). The RSV "Benhinnom" is an English transliteration of the Heb. *ben-hinnom*, "the son of Hinnom." The valley may have derived its name from its first owner, or from someone who camped there. See further on 2 Kings 23:10; Matt. 5:22.

East gate. Rather, "the Potsherd Gate," probably so called because it led into the place where the broken pieces of pottery were cast. If so, the whole setting here furnished Jeremiah with a graphic illustration of what was about to happen to the Jews because of their apostasy.

3. O kings of Judah. It may be that the plural is employed to include both Jehoiakim, who was then reigning, and his successor, Jehoiachin.

His ears shall tingle. This expression was first used in the OT in a prophecy foretelling the doom of the earlier sanctuary at Shiloh (1 Sam. 3:11; see Ps. 78:60), and it is introduced again here to show the destruction of Jerusalem and its Temple (see Jer. 7:14; cf. 2 Kings 21:12–15).

4. Estranged this place. Literally, "made this place unrecognizable," or "made this place strange"; that is, they had turned it from the Lord to a strange god (see 2 Kings 21:1–5, 10–12; 2 Chron. 33:1–7).

Blood of innocents. Evidently a reference to the cruel sacrifices of children to the god Molech (see on ch. 7:31).

5. The high places of Baal. See ch. 2:23.

Burn their sons with fire. See on ch. 7:31.

I commanded not. A figure of speech where emphasis is made by an understatement of the true situation. Not only had God not commanded these practices; He had forbidden them under the most severe penalties (see Lev. 18:21; 20:1–5; Deut. 12:31; 18:9, 10; Jer. 7:31).

6. Tophet. This place connected, as this verse shows, with the "valley of the son of Hinnom" (see v. 2), where in the days of Isaiah and Jeremiah children were made to "pass through the fire to Molech" as sacrifices (2 Kings 23:10; see on Jer. 7:31).

The valley of slaughter. In righteous retribution for Judah's cruel, idolatrous worship this infamous place would be turned into a place of "slaughter" when Jerusalem was taken by the Babylonians (see 2 Kings 25:1–9).

7. I will make void. Literally, "I will lay waste."

Meat for the fowls. See Jer. 7:33; 16:4; 34:20; Rev. 19:17, 18.

8. Desolate, and an hissing. See on ch. 18:16.

Plagues. Literally, “smittings,” that is, the wounds and the slaughter that the invading Babylonians would bring upon the land.

9. Cause them to eat. See Deut. 28:49–57; Lam. 2:20. Josephus records one instance where a mother ate her own child because of the terrible famine in Jerusalem during the siege of Titus in A.D. 70 (*Wars* vi. 3. 4).

11. That cannot be made whole. The Lord had repeatedly warned His people that He was bringing evil upon them for all their sins (chs. 4:6, 7; 18:11; etc.). By a striking enactment the prophet was now to impress this truth upon their minds. The breaking of the vessel dramatically illustrated what the effects of the Babylonian invasion would be. However, the threat was conditional. It was not yet too late to avert the doom upon the city and the nation. God had declared, “At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it; if that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them” (ch. 18:7, 8).

The words, “that cannot be made whole again,” were not intended to imply that God had withdrawn His promises of a return and a reinstatement in the Promised Land following the Babylonian captivity (see p. 31). These promises were subsequently repeated (Jer. 29:10; 30:3; etc.). They were in no wise contradicted by this present prophecy.

Not until the Jews rejected Christ were they finally cast off from being God’s people (Matt. 21:33–43). On the relationship of the present return of the Jews to ancient prophecy see p. 33.

Bury them in Tophet. See on on v. 6. Their burial in Tophet expresses, as it were, the fiery judgment on God that would come upon the apostates because of their iniquity.

There be no place. See on ch. 7:32.

12. Make this city as Tophet. A graphic comparison of the ruin and destruction of the city with the Valley of Hinnom (see on v. 2). The contempt suggested by the name Tophet would be cast upon the whole city of Jerusalem (see on ch. 7:31).

13. Upon whose roofs. The flat roofs of ancient houses were convenient places for the worship of the heavenly bodies (see Jer. 32:29; Zeph. 1:5).

Host of heaven. The sun, moon, and stars (see ch. 8:2).

14. Lord’s house. From the Valley of Hinnom, where he had acted out his message to the leaders of the people (see vs. 1, 2), the prophet now proceeded to the Temple to announce to the people as a whole the coming divine judgment.

15. Thus saith the Lord. Evidently Jeremiah’s discourse to the people repeated what he had given to the leaders in the Valley of Hinnom, so this verse contains only a brief summary of the message.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1, 2, 10, 11, 14 PK 431

15 PK 432

CHAPTER 20

1 *Pashur, smiting Jeremiah, receiveth a new name, and a fearful doom.* 7 *Jeremiah complaineth of contempt,* 10 *of treachery,* 14 *and of his birth.*

1. Son of Immer. This information distinguishes him from “Pashur the son of Melchiah” (ch. 21:1). The son of Immer was possibly the father of the “Gedaliah”

mentioned in ch. 38:1–4, who was one of the princes who later opposed Jeremiah's efforts.

Chief governor. That is, “a deputy leader,” evidently close to the high priest in rank. His high position in the Temple would account for his leading in the aggressive actions against Jeremiah (vs. 2, 3), particularly since the prophet had delivered his message to the people “in the court of the Lord's house” (see ch. 19:14, 15). The events of ch. 20 apparently follow immediately those of ch. 19 (see on ch. 19:1).

2. Jeremiah the prophet. This is the first time in the book that Jeremiah's name and title appear together. The reason is doubtless to highlight the indignity and outrage suffered by Jeremiah.

Stocks. Heb. *mahpeketh*, “something compelling crooked posture,” that is, an instrument of punishment that put the body in a most uncomfortable and painful position. In this suffering, humiliating condition Jeremiah spent the night in one of the most prominent places in Jerusalem, “the high gate of Benjamin.” The gate is probably the same as the Sheep Gate (see ch. 37:13), though some think that these stocks were in another place, and that the high, or upper, gate of Benjamin was an entrance to the Temple enclosure (RSV). The map on p. 490 shows the two possible locations.

3. On the morrow. The prophet was freed from the torture of the stocks after one night, but this does not mean that he was released from imprisonment at this time. It is evident that Jeremiah spent much time in prison while writing out his messages for King Jehoiakim (see PK 433; see on ch. 36:5).

Magor-missabib. Literally, “terror on every side.” The same Hebrew words are translated “fear on every side” (Ps. 31:13; Jer. 6:25; 20:10). It is possible that the prophet found comfort in Ps. 31, and that, because of his trust in God as his Deliverer, he applied the words “fear on every side” to his persecutor rather than to himself as did the psalmist (see Ps. 31:9–16).

5. All the strength. Literally, “all the treasure,” that is, the plunder that the Babylonians would find in Jerusalem.

6. Thou shalt come to Babylon. All the Israelites were carried away into exile except “the poorest sort of the people of the land” (2 Kings 24:14; 25:12; Jer. 40:7).

Thou hast prophesied lies. This plainly implies that Pashur claimed to be a prophet, and that he was a member of the anti-Chaldean party that urged the people to fight against the armies of Nebuchadnezzar, the party that spurned Jeremiah's warnings not to put dependence for national safety upon an alliance with Egypt (see chs. 2:18, 36; 14:13–15; 37:5–10).

7. Thou hast deceived me. See on ch. 4:10. The complaints were probably a reaction to the prophet's distressful night in the stocks (see vs. 2, 3). In his depressed state Jeremiah seems to have considered his work a failure, a failure made more bitter by a haunting fear that God would not fulfill His promises (see Jer. 1:8–10; cf. Jer. 15:10, 17; Jonah 4:1–4).

Stronger than I. In his bitter complaint Jeremiah implies that the Lord has employed His greater power to force Jeremiah, against his own desire and will, to take up a mission from which he shrank.

8. Cried out. Heb. *za'aq*, “to utter a cry of complaint.”

9. *I will not make mention.* His sense of frustration and failure led the prophet to feel that his only recourse was to refrain from carrying out his commission as God's spokesman.

His word. Literally, "it," or "he." The antecedent must be supplied from the context. Some suggest that the reference is to the imperative demand of God that Jeremiah be His mouthpiece, which demand he could not escape; others that the subject is the fire itself, "there is in my heart as it were a burning fire" (RSV).

I could not stay. Better, "I could not stand it."

10. *The defaming of many.* Compare Ps. 31:13. The word for "defaming" means "a whispering," "an evil report." The passage means that Jeremiah had heard many uttering evil reports concerning him.

Fear on every side. Heb. *magor missabib*, the name given to Pashur (see on v. 3).

Report. The idea may be, "Inform on him, and we will report what you tell us." The prophet's persecutors hoped to secure evidence of Jeremiah's disloyalty to the nation (see chs. 11:19; 18:18).

Halting. Or, "stumbling."

Enticed. Or, "deceived" (see v. 7). The enemies were hoping that Jeremiah would be snared into saying something in his prophetic zeal that would bring condemnation upon him and result in his death.

11. *The Lord is with me.* In spite of his anxiety and perplexity Jeremiah does not give way to despair; his trust is still firm in God (see Ps. 23; 27; 2 Cor. 4:1, 8, 9). The waters of trouble cannot overflow this trust, nor the fire of persecution burn out this faith (see Isa. 43:1, 2).

Terrible one. Heb. *'ariš*, derived from the verb *'araš*, "to tremble." The Lord is referred to as the "terrible one," possibly in the sense of "causing others to tremble." If his enemies were "terrible" (see ch. 15:21), the prophet was assured that God "as a mighty terrible one" would be a warrior more than a match for them (see Isa. 9:6).

12. *Lord of hosts.* See on Ps. 24:10; Joshua 5:14. Perhaps a reflection of the thought of v. 11, which depicts God as a warrior.

Reins. See on ch. 17:10.

13. *Sing unto the Lord.* The prophet's distress surrenders to hope; sorrow gives way to joy (see Ps. 30:5).

14. *Cursed be the day.* The rest of the chapter portrays Jeremiah in a depth of despair that reminds us of the patriarch Job (see on Job 3:1–6). We must ever remember that although these Bible characters were strong men of God, they were still human beings "subject to like passions as we are" (James 5:17).

15. *Making him very glad.* The thought of this parental delight added a pang of pain to the prophet's present sorrow (see ch. 15:10). That which brought gladness to Jeremiah's parents brought despair to Jeremiah himself.

16. *Be as the cities.* A reference to those "cities of the plain" (Gen. 19:29) that were overthrown by fire from God. Their destruction became an example of the divine punishment that is certain to result from human evil (see Deut. 32:32; Isa. 1:9, 10; Jude 7).

Shouting. Heb. *teru'ah*, "an alarm signal," perhaps the war cry of an invading army.

17. He slew me not. The chapter closes in a crescendo, as it were, of bold, highly emotional language. The prophet deeply regrets his existence.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

7 PK 420

9 AA 575; Ev 700; PK 432, 437; 7T 27

10 FE 458; PK 420; TM 505; 1T 236, 334, 526

11, 13 PK 420

CHAPTER 21

1 *Zedekiah sendeth to Jeremiah to enquire the event of Nebuchadrezzar's war.* 3 *Jeremiah foretelleth a hard siege and miserable captivity.* 8 *He counselleth the people to fall to the Chaldeans,* 11 *and upbraideth the king's house.*

1. The word. Chapter 21 is not in chronological sequence with the following chapters, but belongs in the reign of Zedekiah. Very probably the events here described occurred at the beginning of Nebuchadnezzar's final siege of Jerusalem, 588 B.C. (see Vol. II, p. 98; Vol. III, p. 92). Seeing Nebuchadnezzar's Babylonian armies closing in upon Jerusalem, Zedekiah, in fear over the threatening outlook, sends two leaders to Jeremiah to inquire of the Lord.

Pashur. Not the one mentioned in ch. 20 (see on ch. 20:1).

Zephaniah. "The second priest" (Jer. 52:24; cf. 2 Kings 25:18), the one next to the high priest.

2. Nebuchadrezzar. This spelling, which occurs frequently in Jeremiah, is closer to the Babylonian *Nabû-kudurri-uṣur* than is the common English form Nebuchadnezzar (see on Dan. 1:1).

If so be. Although the messengers came to make inquiry as to the course the king should take, they suggested, and so expected, an answer favorable to Zedekiah. They desired that the Lord would perform "his wondrous works" in delivering the city from its danger. In view of God's miraculous destruction of the army of Sennacherib (2 Kings 19; Isa. 37), this action may have been one of assumed reverence, having as its purpose the luring of the prophet to join those resisting the Babylonians. Later there was another attempt to win over Jeremiah to the king's side (Jer. 37:3).

Go up from us. That is, raise the siege.

4. I will turn back. Jeremiah informs the king's representatives that their efforts are in vain. God will not turn aside the punishment of His people. The Babylonians will come closer and closer, advancing irresistibly, until finally they come "into the midst of this city."

5. I myself will fight. Many times in their history Israel had faced superior armies with confidence, trusting that the Lord was with them. But now the "God of Israel" (v. 4) declares that He is on the side of the invading Chaldeans. Israel's cause is hopeless.

7. I will deliver Zedekiah. The fearlessness of Jeremiah was strikingly demonstrated by these words regarding a king still on his throne, and one who was being strongly urged by his princes to defy Nebuchadnezzar's power (see ch. 38:1-6).

He shall smite them. This was literally fulfilled (see ch. 52:8-11, 24-27).

8. Behold, I set before you. Here Jeremiah speaks in the literal sense of either finding "the way of life" by surrendering to the Chaldeans or going "the way of death" by resisting them. Elsewhere similar words have been used to convey a higher spiritual meaning (see Deut. 11:26-28; 30:15, 19).

9. *He that goeth out.* Jeremiah's enemies could easily interpret this statement to mean that the prophet was advocating either treachery or desertion. In spite of all the opposition to the prophet, there were many who heeded his words, and as a result saved their lives (see chs. 39:9; 52:15).

For a prey. See chs. 38:2; 39:18; 45:5.

10. *He shall burn it.* Although the capture of besieged cities often brought upon these places destruction by fire, it is also true that many of them escaped this fate, according to the whim of the conqueror. The divine inspiration of Jeremiah's prophecies is indicated by their accurate fulfillment (Jer. 52:12, 13; cf. 2 Kings 25:8, 9; 2 Chron. 36:19).

12. *O house of David.* A reference to the various ruling officials who belonged to the royal family. The judicial functions of the state seem to have been taken over largely by the members of the royal house.

In the morning. Apparently one of the best ways for an Eastern ruler to hold the favor of his subjects was to arise in the early hours of the day and go to the city gate (see on Gen. 19:1) to hear the complaints and pleas of those who had been wronged. David's apparent neglect of this wise procedure opened the way for Absalom's rebellion (see 2 Sam. 15:2–6), whereas Solomon's attention to the needs of the people contributed to the king's fame as a wise man (see 1 Kings 3:16–28). To wait until a later time of the day, when the heat became oppressive, would result in the loss of this opportunity to dispense needed justice to the people (see 2 Sam. 4:5; Eccl. 10:16, 17).

Spoiled. Heb. *gazel*, "to tear away," "to seize," or "to rob."

13. *Inhabitant.* Literally, "inhabitantress." In the Hebrew the feminine gender is used, as in the case of the "daughter of Zion" (Jer. 4:31; 6:2, 23; Ps. 9:14). Possibly this is a reference to the lower part of the city of Jerusalem.

Rock. Heb. *sur*, "a large rock." With a false sense of security the leaders of Jerusalem thought of their city as impregnable.

Who shall come down? Like the Jebusites of old, the people of Judah trusted in what they mistakenly considered to be the impregnable strength of Jerusalem's natural position (see on 2 Sam. 5:6, 7).

14. *In the forest thereof.* This phrase has been understood to mean either (1) the literal forests (see 1 Sam. 23:15), or (2) the royal building, which, because of its cedar columns, was called "the house of the forest of Lebanon" (1 Kings 7:2; 10:21; see 2 Sam. 7:2, 7; see on Jer. 22:6, 7). One of the destructive acts of an invading army, like that of Nebuchadnezzar, was the cutting down of "the tall cedar trees" and "the choice fir trees" (2 Kings 19:23). Repeated desolations of the timber of the land furnish a partial reason for the comparative scarcity of trees in modern Palestine.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

8 EW 221

CHAPTER 22

1 *He exhorteth to repentance, with promises and threats.* 10 *The judgment of Shallum,* 13 *of Jehoiakim,* 20 *and of Coniah.*

1. *Thus saith the Lord.* The exact date of this message is not certain. This much seems clear, however, that it came in the reign of Jehoiakim (see on v. 10; see also PK 429, 430).

3. Judgment. Or, “justice.” From the words in the previous verse, “Thy people that enter in by these gates,” it would seem that Jeremiah delivered this message to the king as he sat in the gate in the presence of his subjects (see on ch. 21:12), probably conducting the affairs of state.

Shed innocent blood. One example of this unrelenting and extreme cruelty was the murder of Urijah by Jehoiakim (see ch. 26:20–23).

4. If ye do this. Here again the prophet graphically portrays the glory and prosperity that would come to Jerusalem if the people fulfilled God’s divine purpose for them (see on ch. 17:25).

5. I swear by myself. An expression emphasizing the certainty of God’s intention to fulfill His purpose (see Gen. 22:16). The reason, of course, why God thus swears is because there is none greater than Himself (Heb. 6:13).

This house. From the context it is plain this refers not to the Temple but to the royal palace.

6. Thou art Gilead. The “king’s house” is here compared to “Gilead” and “the head of Lebanon,” evidently because of the forests that were on the top of both ranges of mountains. The famous “cedars of Lebanon” and the equally famous “oaks of Bashan” were employed as fitting symbols of royal glory and prestige (see Isa. 2:13; Zech. 11:1, 2). It may well be that this verse refers to the royal hall of the forest of Lebanon (see on Jer. 21:14).

7. Thy choice cedars. When he captured Jerusalem, Nebuchadnezzar burned down the beautiful structures of cedar wood (Jer. 52:12, 13; cf. 2 Kings 25:8, 9; 2 Chron. 36:19).

9. Forsaken the covenant. See Deut. 29:24–26. The “covenant” that made Israel God’s special people was broken by the people, not by the Lord.

10. The dead. A reference to the righteous king of Judah, Josiah, for whom Jeremiah had composed a solemn lamentation (see 2 Chron. 35:25). Josiah was greatly respected and beloved by his people, and his untimely death was deeply mourned.

Him that goeth away. A reference to Josiah’s son and successor, Jehoahaz, whom Pharaoh-Necho removed from the throne and carried away into Egypt (2 Kings 23:31–34; 2 Chron. 36:2–4). The fate of this king, who was to “return no more” to his “native country,” was more suitable for lamentation than was the death of Josiah, who had been fatally wounded on the field of battle (see on 2 Kings 23:29, 30; 2 Chron. 35:24), and had thus been spared the evil to come to his people (2 Kings 22:20; Isa. 57:1). These references to Josiah and Jehoahaz indicate that the time when this message was given was certainly after the reign of Jehoahaz (see on Jer. 22:1, 11).

11. Shallum. Otherwise known as Jehoahaz (see on 2 Kings 23:30; 1 Chron. 3:15; 2 Chron. 36:1).

12. He shall die. See on 2 Kings 23:34.

13. Him that buildeth. A reference to Jehoiakim himself (see on v. 1). Jehoiakim evidently showed disregard for the economic condition of his subjects, who were already experiencing the hardships of foreign invasion and the burdens of heavy tribute (see 2 Kings 23:35).

Chambers. Literally, “roof chambers.”

Without wages. Jehoiakim evidently imposed forced labor on some of his unfortunate subjects. Instead of being free, the people were virtually slaves, receiving their food but no wages.

14. A wide house. That is, “a large-sized house,” with large roof chambers (see on v. 13) and wide windows.

Cieled. Literally, “covered,” or “paneled.”

Vermilion. Probably the same red pigment that was used in the buildings of Assyria and Egypt (see Eze. 23:14). Possibly it was cinnabar, or red clay and oxide of iron. Jehoiakim very probably had the vain ambition to emulate the architectural glory of the Egyptian king Pharaoh-Necho, who had placed him on the throne (2 Kings 23:34).

15. Thou closest thyself in cedar. Literally, “because thou competest in cedar.” The same Hebrew word translated “closest” here is translated “contend” in ch. 12:5. In other words, Jeremiah rebukes Jehoiakim for endeavoring to outdo the magnificence proudly displayed by others.

Did not thy father? A reference to Jehoiakim’s father, Josiah, who enjoyed a normal, well-balanced life of judgment and “justice [literally, righteousness].” His was an inner greatness that far surpassed the outer glory of Jehoiakim’s palaces.

16. Was not this to know me? See ch. 9:23, 24. In contrast with his son, Josiah did not seek greatness through secular accomplishment. His greatness was found in his fellowship with the Lord and that fellowship was revealed by Josiah’s justice and mercy toward “the cause of the poor and needy” (see Micah 6:8; Matt. 25:34–40).

17. Thy covetousness. Literally, “thy gain” (see chs. 6:13; 8:10), secured through “oppression” and “violence.”

Innocent blood. See ch. 26:20–23; see on ch. 22:3.

18. They shall not lament. There would be a striking contrast between the death of Jehoiakim and that of Josiah. There would be no mourning for the ungodly son as there was for the godly father (see 2 Chron. 35:25). Jehoiakim’s relatives would not lament the loss of a loved one; nor would the subjects of the king mourn the loss of their ruler (see 1 Kings 13:30; Mark 5:38, 39).

19. He shall be buried. See ch. 36:30. On the possible circumstances surrounding the death of Jehoiakim see on 2 Kings 24:5.

20. Go up to Lebanon. The date of this message (vs. 20–30) cannot be established positively, yet vs. 24–26 indicate that the message was given during the short reign of Jehoiachin, 597 B.C., and was addressed to that king. The mountains of Lebanon and Bashan overlooked the route of the Babylonians, hence an appropriate place upon which to bewail Judah’s calamities.

The passages. Or, “Abarim,” a proper name for that part of the mountainous range south of Gilead and Bashan (see Num. 27:12; 33:47; Deut. 32:49).

All thy lovers. Those nations, such as the Assyrians and the Egyptians, with whom Judah had entered into alliance (2 Kings 16:7–9; cf. Eze. 23:5, 9; see on Jer. 4:30). The climax of this destruction occurred when Pharaoh-Necho’s army was overthrown by Nebuchadnezzar at Carchemish (Jer. 46:2).

21. Thy youth. That is, the “youth,” or beginning of Judah as a nation, not the “youth” of the king.

22. The wind. A reference to the scorching east wind as typifying the calamity that would sweep over the land of Judah (see on chs. 4:11; 18:17).

Eat up all thy pastors. Literally, “shepherd all thy shepherds,” a characteristic Hebrew play on words. This prophecy indicated that the Babylonian invasion would destroy the princes and leading men of Judah.

23. How gracious shalt thou be! An alternative translation is, “how wilt thou groan,” or “how wilt thou sigh.” This is a forceful, graphic way of expressing the inescapable misery and doom about to fall upon the rulers and people of Judah.

24. Coniah. A shortened form of Jeconiah, or Jehoiachin (Jer. 24:1; 37:1; 2 Kings 24:8). Jehoiachin’s reign lasted only from December, 598 B.C., to March, 597 (see pp. 505, 575, 756; also Vol. II, pp. 96, 97; Vol. III, p. 92).

Signet. Heb. *chotham*, “a seal ring.” This seal was the symbol of royal power that validated every decree (see 1 Kings 21:8; Haggai 2:23). It was a most precious possession (see on S. of Sol. 8:6).

Yet would I pluck thee. Or, “yet would I pull you off.” God thus vigorously declared His judgment upon Jehoiachin (see Jer. 24:1; 29:1, 2; cf. 2 Kings 24:12, 15).

25. Nebuchadrezzar. On this spelling see on ch. 21:2.

26. Thy mother. On account of Jehoiachin’s youth when he ascended the throne, it is very likely his mother, Nehushta (2 Kings 24:8; Jer. 29:2), wielded great influence during her son’s reign (see on Jer. 13:18). Because of this, when Coniah’s reign came to an end, her power also ended.

Into another country. Both mother and son were carried as captives to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar (Jer. 29:1, 2; cf. 2 Kings 24:10–15).

27. Not return. It is quite evident that Jehoiachin never returned to the land of Judah, for he was still a captive when Amel-Marduk (Evil-Merodach) ascended the throne of Babylon (see ch. 52:31–34), and so he continued “all the days of his life.”

28. Idol. Heb. *‘ešeb*, “a form,” “a thing,” that is, “something formed.” This word is used in apposition with “vessel,” which in turn refers to a piece of pottery fashioned by a potter. Jehoiachin was a rejected “vessel” cast out into Babylon.

Seed. Heb. *zera’*, meaning either “seed [of plants, etc.],” or “offspring,” “descendants.” This reference seems to imply that, though Jehoiachin was only 18 years of age at this time (597 B.C.), he already had one or more children. Cuneiform records list him as having five children in 592 B.C. (see on 2 Chron. 36:9).

29. Earth. Or, “land” (see on ch. 4:20). The threefold repetition of the word emphasized the certainty of God’s purpose concerning Judah (cf. Luke 22:31; John 8:51; 10:1).

30. Childless. The latter half of v. 30 explains this to mean that none of Jehoiachin’s “seed” (see on v. 28), or offspring, would sit on his throne. Neither Jehoiachin’s immediate children nor his later descendants ever ruled over Judah. Even when Zerubbabel became the leader of the Jews that returned from the Captivity he did not rule as king (see PK 451).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

13–15Te 27

13–17MH 337; PK 429

17 Te 27

18, 19 PK 430

CHAPTER 23

1 *He prophesieth a restoration of the scattered flock. 5 Christ shall rule and save them. 9 Against false prophets, 33 and mockers of the true prophets.*

1. Woe. There is no indication in ch. 23 itself as to the date of this message of woe. However, seeing that the prophecy is placed between a message given before Jehoiachin's captivity (ch. 22:20–30) and a message that immediately follows Jehoiachin's captivity (ch. 24), it is not unreasonable to suppose that this message of ch. 23 came during the year 597 B.C.

Pastors. Literally, "shepherds"; the civil rulers of Judah as well as the priests and the prophets (see on ch. 2:8). Jeremiah presents (ch. 23:1–8) the contrast between these false shepherds and the true ones that God will raise up. It is significant that about this same time, in the land of exile, Ezekiel should similarly contrast the false shepherds with the true (see Eze. 34).

My pasture. A pointed reminder to the leaders of Judah that the Lord is the true Shepherd of His flock (see Ps. 23; 79:13; 100:3; John 10:11–15).

2. Scattered my flock. This accusation was literally as well as spiritually true. As a result of the neglect, tyranny, weakness, and apostasy of their rulers, the Israelites were dispersed into Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, etc.

I will visit. See on Ps. 8:4; Ps. 59:5. Inasmuch as the unfaithful shepherds had "not visited" the flock with the purpose of attending to the needs of the sheep, God would "visit" these shepherds with the purpose of punishing them for "the evil" of their "doings."

3. Bring them again. Though certain and final doom was to fall upon the "shepherds," or rulers, there was hope for "the remnant" of the flock. The prophet brought these messages of hope to Judah at the very time when the besieging armies of Babylon were being brought against Jerusalem (see PK 427), perhaps during the time Jehoiachin was being besieged in 597 B.C. (see on v. 1).

4. Shall feed them. The evil shepherds "fed themselves, and fed not the flock" (Eze. 34:8). God planned that the shepherds of the restoration should be true to their name and trust, and be faithful undershepherds of the "chief Shepherd" (1 Peter 5:2–4).

5. Branch. See on Isa. 11:1; Zech. 3:8; 6:12.

A King shall reign. Or, "He shall reign as King," referring to the "Branch," Christ, who will rule with "judgment and justice" the kingdom of the redeemed (see Isa. 9:6, 7; Dan. 7:13, 14; Rev. 11:15).

6. And Israel. The promise of restoration to those who were faithful was given to all the people, both the house of Judah and the house of Israel (see on ch. 3:18).

The Lord our righteousness. A title calling attention to the fact that righteousness comes only through Christ (see Rom. 1:16, 17; 3:21–25; 8:1–4; 9:30–33).

7. No more. "In the ages to come the deliverance wrought in" behalf of God's people "would exceed in fame that wrought for the children of Israel at the time of the Exodus" (PK 427; see on Jer. 16:14, 15).

8. North country. See on ch. 1:14.

9. Because of the prophets. This phrase somewhat abruptly begins a new part of the chapter in which the wickedness of the false prophets is denounced.

10. Adulterers. Both literally, with regard to the profligate lives of these false prophets, and spiritually, with reference to their worship of other gods (see on ch. 5:7).

Their course. Their manner of life.

Their force. Literally, “their strength”; that on which they prided themselves, instead of on righteousness.

11. Profane. That is, “godless,” or “irreligious.” So iniquitous had these priests and prophets become that they dared to carry on their evil ways in the Temple, the “house of the Lord” (see Jer. 7:8–11; 32:31–34; Eze. 8:3–16).

12. Their visitation. That is, “their punishment” (see on Ps. 8:4; Ps. 59:5).

13. Folly. Heb. *tiphlah*, “unseemliness,” or “unsavoriness.” Jeremiah refers here to the evil of the false prophets of the northern kingdom of Israel to emphasize the greater condemnation resting upon those of the southern kingdom of Judah for their apostate condition (see ch. 3:6–10).

Prophesied in Baal. That is, they gave religious instruction in the name of Baal (1 Kings 18:19; 1 Kings 22:6, 7).

14. An horrible thing. The hypocritical boldness of the false prophets that led them to prophesy in the Lord’s name while they transgressed the Lord’s commandments was more “horrible” to Jeremiah than even the open worship of Baal. Because of the very nature of the sin of hypocrisy, there is more hope for the open sinner than for hypocrites (see 5T 144).

As Sodom. So wicked had these spiritual leaders become that, like Isaiah, Jeremiah likens them to “the inhabitants” of the cities of the plain (see Isa. 1:10).

15. Gall. See on chs. 8:14; 9:15.

Profaneness. That is, “godlessness” (see on v. 11).

16. Lord of hosts. See on ch. 7:3.

Make you vain. Literally, “cause you to become vain,” that is, fill you with vain hopes. This reveals the difference between the true and the false prophets. The former rebuked the people for their sins, pronouncing upon them God’s judgments if they did not repent. The latter soothed and calmed the people with deceptive assurances of peace, which did not come “out of the mouth of the Lord” (see on ch. 14:13).

17. Peace. See on ch. 6:14.

Imagination. Rather, “stubbornness” (see chs. 3:17; 13:10; 18:12). The utterances of the false prophets confirmed the people in their iniquity instead of bringing them to repentance.

18. Stood in the counsel. That is, Who among these false prophets has been permitted by God to share His secret plans and purposes? See on Amos 3:7.

19. Whirlwind. A graphic depiction of the fury and force of God’s wrath upon the transgressors.

20. Not return. That is, God’s “anger” will not turn back until God’s purpose has been executed.

In the latter days. After the Babylonian captivity, then God’s people will understand that it was for their chastisement and discipline (see Eze. 14:22, 23).

21. Yet they ran. These false prophets were like self-appointed messengers who, without waiting for the king’s command, rushed out of the royal court to announce to the people in the king’s name what they had not been commissioned to publish (see 2 Sam. 18:22–29).

22. In my counsel. See on v. 18. The true messenger of God is known to be so by his good fruits (Matt. 7:20, 21).

23. A God at hand. Whereas the true prophets carried on their work with the conviction that God was near to them in thought and action (see Ps. 73:23–26; 139:7–12), the false prophets acted as if the Lord was “afar off,” unconcerned with the purposes and deeds of men (see Ps. 10:11; 73:11; 94:7).

24. Can any hide? A warning in view of God’s omnipresence (see Ps. 139).

25. I have dreamed. The common claim of false prophets. The repetition of the phrase is for emphasis.

27. For Baal. See on v. 13.

28. What is the chaff? The Lord contrasts the real revelation He gives to men with that which is false (v. 32). It will not be difficult to see which one is “chaff” and which is “wheat.”

29. A fire. When the word of the Lord is expressed, it destroys the evil, purifies the good, and consumes as chaff the words of the false prophets (see Jer. 5:14; 20:9; Ps. 39:3; 1 Cor. 3:12, 13).

Like a hammer. Another graphic figure of speech (cf. Matt. 21:44; Heb. 4:12).

30. Steal my words. The pronoun “my” indicates that these false prophets clothed their borrowed messages in the language of the true prophets to insure greater deception.

31. He saith. Heb. *ne’um*, not the ordinary Hebrew word for “speaking,” but a word that refers specifically to a divine utterance. The use of *ne’um* by the false prophets emphasizes the brazenness of their fraudulent claims.

32. By their lightness. Literally, “by their boasting.”

33. Burden. Heb. *maśśa’*, “an utterance” (see on Isa. 13:1).

What burden? Evidently the false prophets haughtily demanded what divine utterance Jeremiah had for them. The repetition of the question conveys a feeling of irony. The LXX and the Vulgate read, “Ye are the burden”; that is, the message is about you and for you.

34. The burden of the Lord. The special judgment of God will fall upon the one who with godless abandon and boastfulness expresses these words.

35. What hath the Lord answered? Evidently a protest against the daringly ungodly use of the words “the burden of the Lord” (v. 34). Rejecting such deceptive teaching, Jeremiah appeals to the people to believe the true expressions of the divine will, which are the true answer to Judah’s problems and difficulties.

36. The Lord of hosts. See on ch. 7:3.

37. What hath the Lord? A repetition for emphasis (see on v. 35).

39. I ... will utterly forget you. Or, “I will surely forget you”; a strongly emphatic way of expressing the Lord’s punishment upon these deceivers, when the capture and destruction of Jerusalem by the coming Babylonian invasion would result in their captivity (see 2 Kings 25:1–21).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1, 2 GC 655

3–6PK 426

5 TM 16

5, 6 AA 223

6 DA 578; MB 18; 6T 91

7, 8 PK 427

- 11 PK 449
 18 3T 441
 21 RC 51
 28 AH 192; COL 40; CT 541; CW 47, 147; Ev 86, 210; FE 307, 381, 451; MYP 286; TM
 318, 334; 1T 602; 7T 153, 204; 8T 302
 29 5T 254
 6

CHAPTER 24

1 *Under the type of good and bad figs, 4 he foresheweth the restoration of them that were in captivity, 8 and the desolation of Zedekiah and the rest.*

1. Shewed. That is, in vision (see Jer. 1:11–13; Zech. 1:8).

Nebuchadnezzar. See on ch. 21:2.

Jeconiah. See on ch. 22:24. The context suggests that the vision came soon after Jehoiachin was taken captive (597 B.C.), possibly before the end of the year.

Princes. The leading men of Judah (see ch. 27:20).

The carpenters and smiths. Literally, “the artisans and the smiths” (see 2 Kings 24:14). The removal of these skilled workmen restricted the possibility of making weapons or defenses (see on 1 Sam. 13:19), and it also undoubtedly provided Nebuchadnezzar with additional artisans for the construction of the magnificent buildings he was erecting in Babylon.

2. First ripe. Usually figs were harvested beginning in August. Those that were the “firstripe” (Hosea 9:10), the “summer fruits” (Micah 7:1), the “hasty fruit before the summer” (Isa. 28:4), were considered a select delicacy.

Naughty figs. Literally, “bad figs,” those that could not “be eaten,” probably because they were damaged, decayed, or of an unpalatable variety.

3. What seest thou? The question would impress the significance of the symbols on Jeremiah’s mind.

4. Again the word. This implies that the prophet was given a period of time until “the word of the Lord came unto” him to reflect upon what he had been shown, although the interval may have been very short.

5. Like these good figs. Those who were “carried away captive” were destined to fare far better than those who remained (see on v. 6). They seemed to be willing to accept God’s leadings even though this meant personal captivity.

6. For good. Materially and economically the condition of the Jews in Babylon at the time of the return from captivity was much above that of slaves or prisoners (see Jer. 29:4–7, 28; cf. Ezra 2:1, 64–70,). The books of Ezra and Nehemiah indicate the tolerant favor the captives of Judah enjoyed under Persian monarchs. The experience of Daniel and his fellows proves how high the Jews could rise in governmental circles. Indeed, it was because of this satisfactory state of affairs that many of the captive Jews did not return to their native land when given the opportunity to do so. However, the real good that God had in mind for the captives was their re-establishment in Palestine and their full restoration to the covenant privileges (see p. 31).

⁶Nichol, F. D. (1978). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary : The Holy Bible with exegetical and expository comment*. Commentary Reference Series (Je 15:9). Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association.

7. *I will be their God.* In a measure this was fulfilled in the postexilic history of the Jews as shown by the fact that never again were they idol worshipers. The Captivity effectively cured them of all tendencies in this direction. However, the promise entailed the full restoration of the covenant privileges (see p. 31).

8. *That remain in this land.* See on v. 5. Subsequent history revealed that those left behind fared far worse than those who had already been carried away captive (see on vs. 9, 10).

In the land of Egypt. Those who lived in Egypt would doubtless share the fate of those who later fled to that country (see ch. 44:26–30).

9. *Deliver them to be removed.* Literally, “give them for a terror”; that is, the evil experience of Judah would cause other kingdoms to be filled with horror.

10. *The sword.* See on ch. 14:12.

Off the land. The climax of the punishment to these disobedient ones is complete removal from the land of their inheritance, whether it comes by exile, by flight, or by death.

Most of the Jews who remained in Judea following the third deportation to Babylon in 586 B.C. voluntarily fled to Egypt after the murder of Gedaliah a few months later. They did this in spite of Jeremiah’s warning that such a course of action would defeat the very purpose that prompted it—fear of further suffering at the hands of Nebuchadnezzar (see ch. 42). Little wonder that God represented these perverse men as “naughty figs.”

CHAPTER 25

¹ *Jeremiah reproving the Jews’ disobedience to the prophets, 8 foretelleth the seventy years’ captivity, 12 and after that, the destruction of Babylon. 15 Under the type of a cup of wine he foresheweth the destruction of all nations. 34 The howling of the shepherds.*

1. *Fourth year of Jehoiakim.* The message of ch. 25 is definitely placed in the year immediately following the taking of the first Jewish captives to Babylon (see on Dan. 1:1). This message given in the 4th year of Jehoiakim, either 605 or 604 B.C., would seem to have preceded the prophet’s parable of the potter’s vessel (see Jer. 18; 19; PK 431).

First year. Nebuchadnezzar succeeded to his father’s throne in the summer of 605 B.C., which would be his accession year. His year 1 would be the next full calendar year, beginning, by Jewish reckoning, in the fall of 605, and in the Babylonian calendar in the spring of 604 (see pp. 505, 755, 756; also Vol. II, pp. 138, 160, 161; Vol. III, pp. 91, 92).

Nebuchadnezzar. See on ch. 21:2.

3. *The thirteenth year.* The Jewish civil year 628/627 B.C. (see on ch. 1:2).

Three and twentieth year. The 23rd of Jeremiah’s personal ministry, not necessarily a calendar or regnal year; probably an example of anniversary reckoning from his first message, perhaps late in Josiah’s 13th year. Only thus could the 23rd year extend into Nebuchadnezzar’s 1st year. (Some count it inclusively to his accession year.)

Rising early. An idiom indicating persevering endeavor (see on ch. 7:13).

5. *Turn ye.* This appeal for repentance, conversion, and obedience expressly sets forth the mission of the true prophet (see 2 Kings 17:13; Eze. 18:30–32).

For ever and ever. If the Israelites had fulfilled their divine destiny, their settlement in the land would have been permanent (see p. 30).

7. *Your own hurt.* See ch. 24:9.

8. *Lord of hosts.* See on ch. 7:3.

9. All the families. The various races subjugated by Nebuchadnezzar, and which furnished men to serve in the Babylonian armies.

Of the north. See on chs. 1:14; 4:6.

Nebuchadnezzar. Regarding this spelling see on ch. 21:2.

My servant. See chs. 27:6; 43:10. Cyrus was similarly designated as God's "servant" in that he would do a work that God wished to have done (see Isa. 44:24 to 45:5).

Astonishment. Heb. *shammah*, "a horror" (see on ch. 5:30).

An hissing. That is, derision.

10. The voice of mirth. Not only would these sounds of joy (see on ch. 7:34) be heard no more, but also "the sound of the millstones," the grinding of corn by women (Ex. 11:5; Matt. 24:41), and "the light of the candle" would cease. The picture presented in Jer. 25:10 is one depicting the complete dissolution of family life, both as to its seasons of rejoicing and as to its daily routine (see Rev. 18:22, 23).

11. An astonishment. Literally, "a horror" (see on ch. 5:30).

Seventy years. This mention of the 70-year period includes the nations immediately surrounding Judah (see v. 9), whereas ch. 29:10 refers to the captivity of Judah only. However, the LXX renders this last clause, "and they shall serve among the Gentiles seventy years," which agrees with ch. 29:10 in applying the 70 years to the Jews only.

This period of 70 years has generally been equated with the 70-year period of Jewish captivity (ch. 29:10). Both of these periods may be reckoned from 605 B.C. to 536 B.C. inclusive (for a discussion of this 70-year period see Vol. III, pp. 90–92, 94–97).

12. I will punish. This prophecy against Babylon began to be fulfilled when "the Medes and Persians" captured the city, killed Belshazzar, and ended the Neo-Babylonian Empire (Dan. 5:17–31). Although Babylon was used by God to chastise His own people, this did not relieve the Babylonians from punishment for their own iniquities (see Jer. 50; 51; cf. Isa. 10:5–16).

The king of Babylon. As one of Israel's chief enemies in OT times, Babylon became a fitting symbol, in the book of Revelation, of apostate Christianity in its opposition to God's remnant people (see on Rev. 14:8; 17:5; 18:2). In large part the symbols of the book of Revelation are drawn from the experiences of literal Israel in ancient times, or are based on the symbolic messages of the OT prophets (see AA 585). For this reason, when the symbols of the book of Revelation are studied, it is important that a most careful consideration be given to their counterparts in OT history and prophecy. Only against such a background do the symbols of the Revelation take on the full meaning Inspiration intended them to convey.

Several aspects of the punishment of literal Babylon as set forth in Jer. 25 are of value in connection with the study of the punishment of mystical Babylon as set forth in Rev. 16 to 19 (see on Isa. 14:4). Note the following:

Jeremiah 25	Revelation 16 to 19
1. "I will take from them the voice of mirth . . . bridegroom . . . bride . . . millstones . . . candle" (v. 10).	1. "The voice of harpers . . . a millstone . . . a candle . . . the bridegroom . . . the bride shall be no more heard in thee" (18:22, 23).
2. "I will punish the king of Babylon" (v. 12).	2. "Great Babylon came in remembrance before God" (16:19; cf. 17:1; 18:7, 8).
3. "I will recompense them	3. "Reward her . . . according to her works" (18:6).

according to their deeds” (v. 14).

4. “The wine cup of this fury” (v. 15).

5. “A sword upon all the inhabitants of the earth” (v. 29).

6. “The Lord shall roar from on high, and utter his voice from his holy habitation; . . . he shall give a shout” (v. 30).

7. “The Lord hath a controversy with the nations” (v. 31).

8. “Evil shall go forth from nation to nation” (v. 32).

9. “The slain of the Lord” (v. 33).

4. “The cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath” (16:19).

5. “The remnant were slain with the sword” (19: 21).
“A sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations” (19:15).

6. “There came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne” (16:17).

7. “He gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon” (16:16).
“In righteousness he doth judge and make war” (19:11; see also 17:14; 19:15, 19).

8. “The spirits of devils, working miracles, . . . go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world” (16:14).

9. “The remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse” (19:21).

14. Serve themselves of them. Literally, “make servants of them.” In divine retribution, the Babylonians, then the leading nation of the world, would in turn become the slaves of their conquerors.

15. Take the wine cup. See Ps. 75:8; Isa. 51:17, 22; Rev. 14:10.

16. They shall drink. A graphic portrayal of the panic and terror experienced by the various nations as the Babylonian conqueror advances upon them. The wine of God’s wrath (see v. 15) will intoxicate them, as it were, with dread and despair (see Isa. 51:17, 22; Jer. 51:7; Hab. 2:16; cf. Rev. 14:10; 17:4; 18:3).

17. Took I the cup. That is, the prophet did this in figure by pouring out his prophecies against these nations.

18. Judah. Jeremiah begins the recital of the divine judgments, with a prophecy of the chastisement pronounced upon his own people for their iniquity, and then he passes on to that to be inflicted upon other nations (see 1 Peter 4:17).

Astonishment. Literally, “a horror” (see on ch. 5:30).

Hissing. An expression of derision.

19. Pharaoh. The king of Egypt at this time was Necho II (610–595 B.C.), who was defeated by Nebuchadnezzar at Carchemish.

20. Mingled people. Or, “mixed multitude” (see Jer. 50:37; cf. Ex. 12:38; Neh. 13:3). Possibly an allusion to the Ionians and Carians whom Psamtik I, the father of Necho II, had settled in Egypt, and who were used in the Egyptian army as auxiliary troops (see Herodotus ii. 152, 154; see also on Dan. 2:39).

Uz. As to the location of this land, see on Job 1:1.

Land of the Philistines. This includes the four cities that immediately follow: Ashkelon, Azzah (the same as Gaza), Ekron, and Ashdod.

Remnant of Ashdod. Possibly an allusion to the fact that the Egyptian king Psamtik I (see Vol. II, p. 90) captured Ashdod after a siege of 29 years (see Herodotus ii. 157).

22. Isles. Heb. ’i, “island,” “coastland,” or “shore.” The islands and coasts of the Mediterranean Sea are referred to (see on Isa. 49:1).

23. Dedan. See on Eze. 25:13.

Buz. The location is uncertain. It is thought by some to have been in Arabia.

Are in the utmost corners. That is, those who cut their hair in a certain manner (see on ch. 9:26).

24. The mingled people. See on v. 20.

25. Zimri. The name of a country found nowhere else in or out of the Bible. Some believe it to be connected with Zimran, Abraham's eldest son by Keturah (Gen. 25:1, 2), and that its position here indicates an Arabian nomad tribe southeast of Palestine. Others consider it a cryptic name for Elam.

Elam. See on Gen. 10:22.

26. Sheshach. Considered by some to be a cryptic name for Babylon, arrived at by a device known as atbash (see on ch. 51:1). When decoded the consonants *sh-sh-k* equal *b-b-l*, the Hebrew form of Babylon. Others think Sheshach may represent the Akkadian *Shishkú*, a name for Babylon appearing in late royal lists.

Drink after them. After forcing the other nations to drink the cup of defeat, Babylon herself would in turn have the same experience.

27. Drink ye, and be drunken. Jeremiah seems to revert to vs. 15, 16 (see comments there), depicting the dread and despair to come upon men through the sorrows of international strife.

Spue. A striking representation of the giving up, or disgorging, of spoils that had been taken in war.

29. I begin to bring evil. Again, as in v. 18, the picture of divine judgment opens with a view of the chastisement of the Israelites (see 1 Peter 4:17). If Jerusalem cannot escape the Chaldean invasion, surely the surrounding nations cannot. Therefore they, as well as Judah, will be wise if they submit to the Babylonian yoke (see Jer. 49:12).

30. Shall roar. Verses 30–33 summarize, by dramatic figure, the message of ch. 25. Earlier the prophet had noted the judgments to fall upon Judah and upon all the nations round about her (v. 9), and finally upon Babylon (v. 12). Now, in summary, God is represented as roaring forth from His habitation to punish all nations.

These words will meet another fulfillment in the closing conflict of the nations immediately preceding the second coming of Christ (see GC 656, 657; PP 340).

Upon his habitation. Literally, “against his pasture ground” (see Joel 3:16; Amos 1:2).

Shout. Compare 1 Thess 4:16.

31. A controversy. Heb. *rib*, “strife,” or “a case at law.” The picture is that of God sitting in judgment upon the wicked nations.

To the sword. The symbol of destruction by war. In the final conflict of nations the wicked will perish by various means (see GC 657).

32. A great whirlwind. For comment see on ch. 23:19.

Coasts of the earth. That is, from the remote parts of earth (see ch. 6:22).

33. The slain of the Lord. See Isa. 34:1–4; 66:15, 16, 24; GC 657.

Not be lamented. Not to receive the respect of the usual burial service would add to the dishonor of their punishment.

34. Ye shepherds. The ones who were false leaders of the people of God's pasture (see on ch. 23:1). The same woe is uttered against the false religious leaders, who, in the last days, have caused the people to trust in a lie (GC 655).

Wallow. Literally, “roll.” “Roll” may be followed by the supplied words “in the ashes” (as in the KJV), or some other expression may be added which fits the context,

such as “on the ground,” or “in the dust.” The act was an expression of mourning and grief.

Principal. Literally, “the mighty ones,” that is, the chieftains and captains of the people.

Pleasant vessel. The LXX renders this clause, “and ye shall fall as the choice rams.”

35. Principal. For comment see on v. 34.

36. Shall be heard. Omitting these supplied words seems to strengthen the force of the sentence, which pictures Jeremiah as actually hearing “the cry” and the “howling” of the leaders of the people.

37. Habitations. Or, literally, “pasture grounds” (see on v. 30).

38. As the lion. The “Lamb of God” is also “the Lion of the tribe of Juda” (Rev. 5:5). A “lion” brings to mind not only a picture of kingly majesty but also a graphic representation of destructive power, such as that which the Lord will use when He performs His “strange act” of destroying the wicked (see on Isa. 28:21). Here Jeremiah takes up again the figure of v. 30, which typifies the Lord’s “fierce anger” as the roaring of a lion (see Amos 3:8) that leaves his “covert” in the forest to seek his prey.

Fierceness. Heb. *charon*, “burning”; always in the sense of “anger,” and used only of God in the OT.

Oppressor. Heb. *yonah*, the participle of *yanah*, “to oppress.”

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1–38PK 430, 431

2, 3 PK 430

5 PK 319

8–11PK 430

12 PK 552

15–19PK 431

29 PK 450

30 PP 340; 1T 354

31 GC 656; ML 362; Te 231

33 EW 290; GC 657; SR 415

34, 35 GC 655

CHAPTER 26

1 *Jeremiah by promises and threatening exhorteth to repentance.* 8 *He is therefore apprehended,* 10 *and arraigned.* 12 *His apology.* 16 *He is quit in judgment, by the example of Micah,* 20 *and of Urijah,* 24 *and by the care of Ahikam.*

1. Beginning of the reign. This is not a definite date (see on ch. 28:1), but may safely be considered to be at some time approximately between 609 and 605 B.C. Certainly it was before the first siege of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar (see on Dan. 1:1), for the Babylonians are not mentioned in the chapter and Jehoiakim is pictured as being friendly toward Egypt. The message of the Temple Discourse of Jer. 7–10 is summarized briefly here in ch. 26. The reactions to the discourse by the people and the leaders and the final outcome of the entire incident is recorded only here (see on ch. 7:1; see also PK 415–419).

2. Stand in the court. See on ch. 7:2. Verses 2–6 of ch.26 are a summary of ch. 7:1–15. Very likely this incident took place at one of the feasts that drew together worshipers from all parts of the nation.

Diminish not a word. Evidently the divine message was to contain something that Jeremiah would shrink from delivering to the people.

3. If so be. That is, “perhaps.” So severe is the threat that follows (see v. 6) that it is expressed with the hope that it may not have to be carried out.

Repent. See on v. 19.

4. To walk in my law. It was a prophet’s responsibility to teach the people the demands the law of God made upon them, and to endeavor to make it plain to their understanding (see chs. 7:25–28; 25:4–7).

5. Rising up early. See on ch. 7:13.

6. Make this house like Shiloh. The site of the ancient sanctuary was destroyed (see on ch. 7:12, 14).

7. Priests and the prophets. Jeremiah was commissioned by God to bring a warning in a special way to the two orders to which he himself belonged, to the former by birth (see on ch. 1:1) and to the latter by divine appointment (see on ch. 1:5). The false prophets were specially hostile to Jeremiah (ch. 23:9–40).

8. Thou shalt surely die. In their iniquity and self-deception the priests, prophets, and “all the people” determined to silence the accusing voice of the one who was faithful in pointing out their iniquities.

9. Why hast thou prophesied? That the Temple, which was the Israelites’ pride and glory (see on ch. 7:4), should suffer the fate of the old sanctuary of Shiloh was an unbearable thought that rallied “all the people” against the prophet. The people had placed their entire confidence in a strict observance of the outward religious services of the Temple.

10. Princes of Judah heard. Apparently these royal rulers were not present when Jeremiah delivered the divine warning, but were in “the king’s house,” possibly in counsel with the king. When they now came to the Temple they “sat down” to hear what Jeremiah would say next.

11. Worthy to die. Here we have a good example of the kind of vicious initiative and method so characteristic of the Dark Ages, which turned over those falsely charged with heresy and blasphemy to the secular arm of the state for punishment and death.

12. The Lord sent me. Always the response of true prophets and preachers of the Word is that their message is not of their own choosing and devising, but comes through them directly from God (see 2 Sam. 23:1–3; Amos 3:7, 8; 2 Peter 1:20, 21).

13. Amend your ways. Jeremiah’s defense was simply and only the message God had given him. If God’s people reformed their ways, the threatened destruction could even yet be averted.

Lord will repent. See on v. 19.

14. I am in your hand. By this bold disregard of his own personal safety Jeremiah added to the force of his message, and, in fact, by this means preserved his life. The princes were satisfied as to Jeremiah’s sincerity and took measures to protect his life (see PK 418).

15. But know ye for certain. The prophet appeals, not to the priests and prophets, from whom he can expect no justice, but “unto all the princes and to all the people” (see

v. 12). It was the princes especially who hesitated to shed the innocent blood of one who spoke not for himself but for God.

16. Not worthy to die. Through his straightforward message Jeremiah evidently swung the balance of public opinion over in his favor, and his life was therefore spared.

17. The elders. So called either because of their official eminence (see 1 Kings 8:1; 20:7) or because of their age. Great respect was given to the opinion of those who possessed both age and wisdom.

18. Micah. Identical with the author of the book of Micah (see Micah 1:1; p. 22).

19. Fear the Lord. While there is no other reference to this specific experience in the Scriptures, it accords with Hezekiah's character (see 2 Chron. 29:4–10; 32:26).

The Lord repented. See on Gen. 6:6; Ex. 32:14; Num. 23:19; Judges 2:18; Joel 2:13.

Procure great evil. The thought of the Hebrew is that they were, or might be, doing great evil against themselves, if they should take the life of an innocent prophet. The LXX reads, "Whereas we have wrought great evil against our own souls." This verse parallels the advice of Gamaliel as he stood before the council, "But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God" (see Acts 5:34–39). The result of this counsel given by the elders was to open the way for Jeremiah to continue his ministry. Owing largely to the support given the prophet by Ahikam (see Jer. 26:24), this advice of the elders was acted upon by the rulers of the nation.

20. Urijah. This incident was probably recorded to show that the experience of Jeremiah was not unique.

21. Into Egypt. See the parallel cases of Jeroboam (1 Kings 11:40), Hadad (1 Kings 11:17, 18), and Joseph and Mary (Matt. 2:13–15). The country along the Nile was frequently an asylum for refugees from Judea.

22. Sent men into Egypt. Ancient treaties contained a clause in which both parties promised to return political prisoners to their country of origin.

Elnathan. Probably the king's father-in-law (see 2 Kings 24:8). Elnathan was one of the princes favorable to Jeremiah (Jer. 36:12).

23. Fetched forth Urijah. For earlier instances of the martyrdom of prophets, see 1 Kings 19:10, 14; 2 Chron. 24:19–22. According to Jewish tradition Isaiah was "sawn asunder" by Manasseh (see Heb. 11:37; EGW, Supplementary Material, on Isa. 1:1). Urijah was treated most shamefully. "His dead body" was denied burial with his fathers, and was "cast ... into the graves of the common people" in the Kidron Valley. Later the king who committed this dishonor was himself "buried with the burial of an ass," without customary funeral honors or mourning (Jer. 22:18, 19).

24. Ahikam. Ahikam's father was probably the Shaphan who was a well-known scribe in Josiah's reformation, the one who superintended the restoration of the Temple (see 2 Kings 22:3, 8–14; 2 Chron. 34:8, 14–21). Ahikam's brothers, Gemariah (Jer. 36:12, 25) and Elasah (ch. 29:3), were of like noble character. It was with Ahikam's son, Gedaliah (see ch. 40:6), "governor over the cities of Judah," that Jeremiah found refuge after Nebuchadnezzar's conquest of Judea (ch. 40:5, 6).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1–24PK 415–418; 4T 165–168

2, 3 4T 165

4–6PK 415; 4T 166

8–154T 167

CHAPTER 27

1 *Under the type of bonds and yokes he prophesieth the subduing of the neighbour kings unto Nebuchadnezzar. 8 He exhorteth them to yield, and not to believe the false prophets. 12 The like he doeth to Zedekiah. 19 He foretelleth, the remnant of the vessels shall be carried to Babylon, and there continue until the day of visitation.*

1. Jehoiakim. Several Hebrew manuscripts read “Zedekiah,” which is undoubtedly the correct reading, as clearly proved by vs. 3, 12 (see ch. 28:1). While Zedekiah ruled by the sufferance of Nebuchadnezzar, who placed him on the throne (see 2 Kings 24:17–19), he and the neighboring kings who paid tribute to Babylon did not give up hope of freeing themselves from the Chaldean yoke. The experience of Jer. 27 occurred in the 4th year of Zedekiah, about 593 B.C. (see on ch. 28:1).

2. Bonds and yokes. The acting out of such symbolic predictions as this (see Isa. 20:2; Jer. 18; 19; Eze. 12:5–7; Acts 21:11) was to impress forcefully upon the people what the future held for them, and to arouse them, if possible, to a sense of their spiritual lack. Appearing as he did, as though he were a captive slave in bonds or a beast of burden under the yoke, Jeremiah would capture the attention of all as words alone could not. The nations involved in this conspiracy, especially Zedekiah, were to be left without any excuse for thinking that their plans had any prospect of success.

3. Send them. As shown in the closing part of the verse the kings named here had sent “messengers,” or ambassadors, to Zedekiah urging an alliance against Nebuchadnezzar. These nations are mentioned in the same order in the prophecy of ch. 25:21, 22, given 11 years before. This former prediction had partially been fulfilled at this time. However, for some reason these kings entertained the hope that they could succeed in a rebellion against Nebuchadnezzar.

4. Command them. Jeremiah was commissioned to tell the representatives of the kings named in v. 3 that their endeavors would be futile; that in the providence of God, Babylon was to be the irresistible conqueror of nations, the divine instrument to punish them for their iniquities.

The Lord of hosts. See on ch. 7:3. This title applied to “the God of Israel” was specially used to impress upon the nations that knew not the Lord, that the true God, the God of the “hosts” of heaven, was more than a match for the armies of earth (see on Joshua 5:14; Ps. 24:10).

5. Have given it. A reminder that the same God who created the earth (Amos 4:13; 9:6) is the One who controls its destiny, who “removeth kings, and setteth up kings” (see Ps. 83:18; Dan. 2:21; 5:18, 19; for further comment see on ch. 4:17).

Meet. That is, it seemed “suitable.”

6. My servant. See on ch. 25:9.

The beasts of the field. Conquering armies levied particularly the horses and cattle of the conquered peoples, thus aggravating the distress and despair of the vanquished.

7. His son, and his son’s son. See Additional Note on Dan. 5. This may be suggestive of the short duration of the Babylonian Empire after Nebuchadnezzar’s reign, for his line did not descend beyond the second generation after him, in either the direct or the indirect line (see Vol. III, p. 47). This may refer to Nabonidus and Belshazzar (Nebuchadnezzar’s son-in-law and son-in-law’s son), as the two most prominent rulers

following Nebuchadnezzar, though this is not necessarily the case. Rather than referring to any specific successors of Nebuchadnezzar, it may simply mean that the kingdom would exist for an undefined length of time.

Shall serve themselves of him. Although “all nations shall serve” Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon would not establish an empire of long duration. The Persians and other peoples would in turn subdue the Babylonian king, and so “shall serve themselves of him” (see ch. 51:11, 27–29).

8. *Sword.* The scourges of war, sword, famine, and pestilence are again enumerated (see on ch. 14:12).

9. *Diviners.* Those that cast lots or used other means to determine a course of action (see on Eze. 21:21; Dan. 1:20).

Enchanters. See on Lev. 19:26.

Sorcerers. See on Ex. 7:11; Dan. 2:2; cf. Isa. 47:9, 12. The predictions of all these pagan prognosticators were evidently in agreement in urging these five nations to rebel against Nebuchadnezzar.

10. *To remove you.* Through divine inspiration Jeremiah knew what the result would be if the kings followed the false counsel of the heathen oracles. The kings and their armies would go forth to battle and perish, as did Ahab when he hearkened to the “lying spirit in the mouth” of false prophets (1 Kings 22:15–37).

12. *Bring your necks.* The same advice given to the surrounding nations (v. 11) is specifically directed to “Zedekiah king of Judah.” As leader of the people the king, if he had so desired, could presumably have led the nation to yield to Babylon (see PK 458).

13. *The sword.* See on chs. 14:12; 27:8.

The nation. Not one nation only, but *any* nation that would not yield to Babylon.

14. *They prophesy a lie.* On the deceptive work of these false prophets see on chs. 14:13; 23:1, 2, 11, 21, 23, 30, 31, 33, 34.

15. *That.* Heb. *lema'an*, “in order that.” However, it is not necessary that purpose be expressed here, for *lema'an* may be used in an ironical sense. The result of following the disobedience of Judah is stressed here, rather than God’s purpose. In the Bible, God is frequently presented as doing that which He does not restrain (see on 1 Kings 22:22).

16. *Shortly be brought again.* Nebuchadnezzar had carried off these “vessels of the Lord’s house” before Zedekiah ascended the throne (2 Kings 24:10–13; 2 Chron. 36:7). To comfort the people, who greatly mourned this important loss, the false prophets predicted that these sacred vessels would soon be returned to Jerusalem. However, these vessels were not brought back until Cyrus restored them to the Jews (Ezra 1:7–11).

17. *Wherefore should this city.* It is evident that this false prediction of the soon return of the Temple vessels was both a prophecy and an incentive to rebellion. Jeremiah saw that a revolt could lead only to the devastation of Jerusalem and the consequent destruction of the Temple.

18. *Make intercession.* Jeremiah advises the false prophets to plead with God that the vessels Nebuchadnezzar did not take previously might “go not to Babylon,” rather than waste their time in futile efforts to regain those vessels that were already taken away from the Temple.

19. *The pillars.* The two bronze columns called Jachin and Boaz that were on each side of the Temple porch (see on 1 Kings 7:15). As to the molten “sea” that was supported by twelve oxen, see on 1 Kings 7:23. The ten “bases” for the ten lavers are

described in 1 Kings 7:27–37. Though not enumerated here, the ark was still in the Temple, where it remained until it was hidden during the final siege of Jerusalem (see PK 453).

20. Jeconiah. See on ch. 22:24.

22. Carried to Babylon. For the fulfillment of this prophecy see 2 Kings 25:13–15.

Until the day. An allusion to the end of the seventy years of captivity (see Jer. 25:11, 12; 29:10; Dan. 9:2).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1–22PK 443, 444; 4T 168, 169

2, 3 4T 168

2–11PK 443

4–11, 21, 224T 169

CHAPTER 28

1 *Hananiah prophesieth falsely the return of the vessels, and of Jeconiah.* 5 *Jeremiah, wishing it to be true, sheweth that the event will declare who are true prophets.* 10 *Hananiah breaketh Jeremiah's yoke.* 12 *Jeremiah telleth of an iron yoke,* 15 *and foretelleth Hananiah's death.*

1. The same year. The time of ch. 28, that is, the 4th year of Zedekiah's reign (approximately 593 B.C.), follows not long after that of ch. 29.

Hananiah. This man seems to have been one of Jeremiah's most prominent opponents and one of the leaders of the resistance party that was endeavoring to form an alliance with the neighboring nations against Babylon (see ch. 27).

Gibeon. Like Anathoth, this was one of the cities of priests (see Joshua 21:13, 17, 18). This may indicate that Hananiah, like Jeremiah, was a priest as well as a "prophet." At one time "the tabernacle of the Lord" was at Gibeon (1 Kings 3:4; 1 Chron. 16:39; 2 Chron. 1:3). Gibeon, the modern *ej-Jīb*, was 5¼ mi. (8.4 km.) northwest of Jerusalem.

2. Broken the yoke. The reference is undoubtedly to the "yoke" mentioned by the true prophet (ch. 27:2). Hananiah presumed to contradict the inspired message of Jeremiah.

3. Two full years. It is possible that the alliance between Judah and the neighboring nations against Nebuchadnezzar (see ch. 27:1–8) was taking shape and that Hananiah did not doubt the certainty of its success.

All the vessels. Presumptuously Hananiah predicts a great shortening of the period of time that Jeremiah said "the vessels of the Lord's house" would remain in Babylon (see ch. 27:22).

4. Jeconiah. See on ch. 22:24. Evidently Jehoiachin was still regarded by many as the rightful king (see Vol. II, pp. 96, 97), whom they expected to see return and be restored to his throne. This outcome would directly contradict Jeremiah's prophecy that Jehoiachin would not return to Judah but would die in a foreign country (ch. 22:24–26).

6. Amen. The prophet may have meant, "I wish that were the case; it would be wonderful if that were true." Some, however, hold that Jeremiah uttered these words in biting irony, the prophet seemingly putting himself in accord with the prediction of Hananiah only the more emphatically to reveal its falsity.

7. Nevertheless. The Lord had something to say in the matter regardless of any wishes or predictions of man.

9. Peace. See on ch. 6:14.

Prophet be known. To gain favor the false prophet satisfied and deceived the people with promises of an assured prosperity, in opposition to the predictions of “evil, and of pestilence” (see v. 8) given by the true prophet (see on ch. 14:13). Jeremiah knew he could rest his case on the issue of the fulfillment or nonfulfillment of his prophecies (see Deut. 18:20–22).

10. Brake it. This experience of the false prophet Hananiah and the true prophet Jeremiah parallels that of Zedekiah and Micaiah (1 Kings 22:8–25). By this presumptuous act of force Hananiah undoubtedly wished to show the people that he would not permit them to be outraged by this odious symbol of servitude. His breaking of the yoke was meant to be a guarantee that the Babylonian power would be destroyed.

11. Two full years. See on v. 3.

Jeremiah went his way. The true prophet did not resist or retaliate against Hananiah’s use of physical force.

12. Then the word. It may be that this “word” did not come immediately after the experience of v. 11. The RSV introduces the verse with the words, “Sometime after the prophet Hananiah had broken the yoke-bars,” etc.

13. Yokes of iron. See Deut. 28:48. As a rebuke to all attempts to resist Nebuchadnezzar as His chosen “servant” to punish His people (see Jer. 25:9), God persists in using the figure of the yoke, but this time with a stronger, more severe force, that of “iron,” thus warning the apostates that any resistance would only result in more bitter and more painful bondage.

14. Lord of hosts. See on chs. 7:3; 27:4.

Beasts of the field. See ch. 27:6.

16. I will cast thee. Literally, “I will send thee”; which repeats, for ironical effect, the same Hebrew verb for “sent” as in v. 15.

This year. Literally, “the year,” perhaps a year’s interval (not necessarily the remainder of that regnal year), like Hananiah’s “within two full years” mentioned on an earlier occasion (vs. 3, 11). “This year,” extending into “the seventh month” (v. 17), would allow time for Hananiah to repent or for the people to detect his false claims. His death parallels the fate of Ananias and of Elymas (see Acts 5:4, 5; 13:6–11).

17. The same year. Literally, “that year,” referring to “the year” of v. 16, not necessarily the “fourth year” of v. 1. At most, a sixth of a year had passed (v. 1) when Jeremiah’s prediction of v. 16 was fulfilled. The speedy fulfillment of the prophet’s prediction should have impressed on the people the genuineness of Jeremiah’s calling, but doubtless some refused to accept even this as an evidence in his favor.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1–17PK 444–446; 4T 170–172

1 4T 170

2–4PK 445

3–84T 170

9 PK 445

9–174T 171

10–17PK 446

CHAPTER 29

1 *Jeremiah sendeth a letter to the captives in Babylon, to be quiet there, 8 and not to believe the dreams of their prophets, 10 and that they shall return with grace after*

seventy years. 15 *He foretelleth the destruction of the rest for their disobedience.* 20 *He sheweth the fearful end of Ahab and Zedekiah, two lying prophets.* 24 *Shemaiah writeth a letter against Jeremiah.* 30 *Jeremiah readeth his doom.*

1. The words of the letter. Probably not long after Jehoiachin was taken captive (see on v. 2) this letter was sent by Jeremiah to the captives in Babylon (2 Kings 24:8–16; 2 Chron. 36:5–8; Dan. 1:1–4). Despised and rejected by his brethren at home, Jeremiah directs his attention to the exiles.

The residue of the elders. This shows that not all of these leading men (see Eze. 8:1; 20:1) had gone into exile.

2. After that Jeconiah. See on ch. 22:24. This was probably written in the early part of Zedekiah's reign, and so before the events of chs. 27 and 28 (see on chs. 27:1; 28:1).

The queen. That is, the queen mother (see on ch. 13:18); Jehoiachin's mother, Nehushta, wife of Jehoiakim, was captured with him (2 Kings 24:8, 12, 15).

Carpenters, and the smiths. See on ch. 24:1.

3. By the hand. These two men were evidently friends and supporters of Jeremiah, and it was natural that Jeremiah should entrust them with his messages to the exiles in Babylon. Elasah, called "the son of Shaphan," was likely a brother of Ahikam, Jeremiah's protector (see on ch. 26:24). Gemariah was probably the son of the Hilkiah who was the high priest during Josiah's reign, and who found the book of the law and was otherwise prominent in the work of reformation (see 2 Kings 22; 2 Chron. 34). The letter was sent from Jerusalem (Jer. 29:1).

4. I have caused. The prophet informed the exiles that their being in captivity at that time was not contrary to God's will, and that they should accept quietly their fate and make the best of the situation.

5. Build ye houses. The fact that such counsel was necessary indicates that, like their brethren in the homeland (see ch. 28), the Jewish exiles in Babylon were restless and unwilling to yield to their Chaldean conquerors. This attitude received support from the false prophets among them, who urged the people not to submit. Jeremiah counseled the exiles to accept patiently their present state of subjection.

6. They may bear. The birth of grandchildren in exile indicates that their captivity would last for at least two generations. It was also revealed that they would be left in comparative peace to pursue their ways, for their captors would permit them to possess houses and land (see on v. 5). The royal favor extended to Daniel must have been a factor in easing the lot of the Jewish captives.

7. Peace. See on ch. 6:14. To carry out this injunction to pray for Babylon must have been a most difficult experience for the exiles, in view of the natural feeling of resentment the captives would harbor against their conquerors (see Ps. 137). The Lord manifested the same kindly, tolerant spirit toward the Chaldeans that Jesus later displayed toward the inhospitable Samaritans (see Luke 9:54–56).

8. Prophets and your diviners. These two classes of deceivers were carrying on their work in Babylon as in Judea, predicting that the Jews would be speedily delivered from their captivity (see ch. 28:1–3). The "diviners" were those who attempted to foretell the future by various methods of interpretation of signs and omens (see on Dan. 1:20).

Ye cause to be dreamed. These deceptive dreams were, after all, those that the Israelites wanted to hear, again emphasizing the earlier divine lament, "my people love to have it so" (see Jer. 5:31; Isa. 30:9, 10; Micah 2:11).

9. In my name. In unholy boldness and hypocrisy these deceivers pretended to speak for God (see on ch. 14:13).

10. Seventy years. In denial of this illusive hope of a short captivity, God again affirms that the Captivity will be for the full 70 years (see ch. 25:12). By this time about 10 years of the 70 had already passed by (see on ch. 25:1, 12).

I will visit you. See on Ps. 8:4; 59:5. When the 70 years would come to its end, then, and not before, would God “perform” His “good word” of promised grace and mercy by causing His people “to return to this place.”

11. Thoughts of peace. See on ch. 6:14. Even the captivity of the exiles would be for their own good (see on ch. 24:5–10). God assured and comforted His people with the promise that when the 70 years would end, His “eyes” would be “upon them for good” (ch. 24:6).

An expected end. Literally, “a latter end and an expectation.” In other words, God promises His chosen nation that all things will come out well for them in spite of their captivity. If in justice the Lord had to “wound” His children by means of the Captivity, in His love and mercy He would “heal” them by means of the restoration (see Deut. 32:39; Job 5:18; Hosea 6:1).

13. With all your heart. This wonderful promise is an echo of Deut. 4:29. God makes it plain that He can do nothing for His people unless they seek Him with sincerity of purpose.

15. Prophets in Babylon. Certain false prophets (see on v. 21), whom these boasters preferred to Jeremiah.

16. Of the king. That is, of Zedekiah.

17. Sword. Another mention of the three scourges, sword, famine, pestilence, arising out of war (see on ch. 14:12).

Vile. Heb. *sho‘arim*, “horrid,” “disgusting,” a stronger expression of loathsomeness than “very naughty” (ch. 24:2). Jeremiah again compares those left in Judah after Jehoiachin’s captivity to worthless figs, which cannot be eaten (see on ch. 24:8–10).

18. Sword. See v. 17; see on ch. 14:12.

Deliver them to be removed. Literally, “give them for a terror” (see on ch. 24:9).

Astonishment. See on ch. 25:9.

19. Rising up early. An idiom indicating persevering effort (see on ch. 7:13).

20. I have sent. See on v. 4.

21. Ahab. Nothing is known of these false prophets, Ahab and Zedekiah, except what is here stated. They were probably the leaders of the party of revolt among the exiles.

Nebuchadrezzar. For an explanation of this spelling of the Babylonian king’s name see on ch. 21:2.

22. Roasted in the fire. This method of execution was evidently common among the Babylonians for traitorous rebels (see Dan. 3:6, 20). If these false prophets were agitators among the exiles (see on v. 21), the Babylonians would consider no punishment too cruel.

23. Villany. Literally, “senselessness,” “folly,” from a word in Hebrew that carries the suggestion of unchastity (see Gen. 34:7; Deut. 22:21; Judges 19:23, 24). This shows that these leaders, Ahab and Zedekiah, like their fellows in Jerusalem, lived base and profligate lives (see Jer. 23:14).

Even I know. These false religious leaders must have deceived the people into believing them to be men of good moral character. If the adulteries of the false prophets were known, they would lose their influence over the minds of the people. God here opened to the view of all a record of the sinful conduct of these apostate prophets.

24. Thus shalt thou also speak. It appears that a new section begins here and that v. 23 concludes the copy of the letter begun in v. 4. Jeremiah's message to the exiles stirred up the wrath of the rival, false prophets in Babylon, and a movement was formed to destroy Jeremiah.

Shemaiah. Evidently a Jewish leader in Babylon in the opposition against Jeremiah. Nothing further is known of him beyond what is revealed here.

Nehelamite. The marginal reading, "dreamer," is based on the assumption that "Nehelamite" is derived from the Heb. *chalam*, meaning "to dream," an assumption that is rejected by most scholars.

25. Hast sent letters. These may have been sent by the messengers named in v. 3 when they returned from Babylon. When the messages reached Jerusalem, Jeremiah was apprised of them. As a result he sent a reply message severely rebuking Shemaiah.

Zephaniah. Inasmuch as he was "the second priest" (Jer. 52:24; cf. 2 Kings 25:18), it was hoped that his authority and influence would prevent Jeremiah from prophesying, and that he would be punished as a deceiver. Zephaniah acted for King Zedekiah in a sort of temporizing fashion (see Jer. 21:1; 37:3). Later on, when Nebuzaradan, the Babylonian "captain of the guard," captured Jerusalem, Zephaniah was taken prisoner and executed (ch. 52:24–27).

26. Jehoiada. Some have suggested that he was replaced by Zephaniah because he did not support the policy of the party of revolt. Inasmuch as it was probably the duty of "the second priest" to preserve order in the Temple and to punish prophetic impostors, Shemaiah rebuked Zephaniah for his lukewarmness and timidity in the discharge of his office in that he did not suppress Jeremiah, who here gives the contents of Shemaiah's "letters" (v. 25).

Every man that is mad. A scornful term frequently applied to pretenders (see 2 Kings 9:11; Hosea 9:7).

In the stocks. See on ch. 20:2.

28. This captivity is long. The supplied word, "captivity," is probably correct, judging from the context (see vs. 5, 10).

29. Read this letter. Zephaniah evidently did this either to warn Jeremiah of his enemies' plot against him or to induce the prophet to soften and moderate his words.

31. Send to all. This seems to indicate that communication between Babylon and Palestine was frequent.

32. I will punish Shemaiah. The specific manner of punishment is not indicated in Shemaiah's case as it was in the cases of Ahab and Zedekiah (see vs. 21, 22).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1–324T 172–174

1 4T 172

5–7PK 442

5–94T 172

7 PK 440

8, 10 PK 441

10 4T 169, 172
 10–13PK 553
 11 DA 57; Ed 21, 101; MB 101; PP 129
 12, 13 ML 19
 13 SC 43; 4T 43, 533; 6T 51
 13, 14 6T 53
 14 PK 552; 4T 172
 21 PK 442
 21–234T 173

CHAPTER 30

1 *God sheweth Jeremiah the return of the Jews. 4 After their trouble they shall have deliverance. 10 He comforteth Jacob. 18 Their return shall be gracious. 20 Wrath shall fall on the wicked.*

1. The word. See on ch. 1:1.

2. Write thee all the words. The prophet was instructed to write down that which had been revealed to him regarding the restoration of Israel, and this record is found in chs. 30 and 31. These promises of future restoration were recorded by the prophet immediately after the interchange of letters in ch. 29 (see EGW, Supplementary Material, on chs. 25; 27–29; 30; 31).

3. I will bring again. The divine promise of ch. 29:10–14 is here broadened to include not only the southern kingdom of Judah but also the northern kingdom of Israel as well. The prophet’s heart goes out not only to the captives in Babylon but to those in Assyria and in the cities of the Medes (see 2 Kings 17:5, 6).

5. A voice of trembling. The LXX reads “a sound of fear.” God pictures to the prophet the Israelites in a most distressful condition (see Lam. 2:18–22). The words will have yet another fulfillment in the time of distress “through which the people of God must pass just before Christ’s second coming” (PP 201).

Not of peace. See on ch. 6:14.

6. A man doth travail with child. In no more graphic fashion can the harrowing sufferings of men be described (see chs. 4:31; 6:24; 13:21).

7. That day is great. Primarily, the prophet sees here the distress that will soon be brought upon Jerusalem and Judea by the Babylonians under their great conqueror, Nebuchadnezzar (see 2 Kings 25; 2 Chron. 36:17–21). When applied to the time of the end, “that day” looks forward to the great day of the Lord at the end of this present world’s history. Of that event the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians and by the Romans was “but a faint shadow” (GC 36; see on Jer. 30:5; Joel 1:15).

The time of Jacob’s trouble. The LXX reads “a time of straitness to Jacob.” Jeremiah illustrates the intensity of the experience that was to come to Israel (see on v. 6) by a comparison with the experience of Jacob when he wrestled with the Angel (see on Gen. 32:24–26). Jacob was threatened by an angry brother ready to kill in revenge for past wrongs. To prepare for the crisis, Jacob tarried to spend the night in prayer. The burden of his heart was that everything should be right with God. As far as he could, Jacob had endeavored to right every wrong that he had committed. By his persistence and faith, Jacob was given the assurance of God’s blessing before the night had passed. In looking forward to the experience of the children of Jacob, Jeremiah shows that, at the time of the Babylonian invasion (see on Jer. 34:7), they would pass through an agony

similar to that of their ancestor. But with the prophecy of such great “trouble” the prophet coupled an assurance to every faithful soul that “he shall be saved out of it.”

This same experience of intense soul searching will come to spiritual Israel after the close of probation, just before the Lord’s second advent. Only those who have confessed every known sin will be able to come forth victors from that time of spiritual agony known as the “time of Jacob’s trouble” (see GC 616–623).

8. *I will break his yoke.* Primarily referring to the yoke of the Babylonians, which was broken when, under Cyrus, the exiles were permitted to return to their own land (see 2 Chron. 36:22, 23; Ezra 1:1–4).

10. *Fear thou not.* This comforting assurance is substantially repeated in ch. 46:27, 28 (see Isa. 41:8–16; 43:5–7).

Jacob. Here synonymously used for “Israel” (see Gen. 32:27, 28) to represent the people of God.

Save thee from afar. Primarily this refers, as shown by the context, to the return of the exiles from their Babylonian captivity.

Be quiet. The promises of future prosperity were conditional on obedience (see pp. 31, 32).

11. *Correct thee in measure.* Here God gives His people the assurance that although, because of their transgressions, He has to discipline them, He will restore them when they have learned the lesson of obedience to Him. In His love God will not “make a full end” of them, as He would do with the heathen oppressors of His people.

12. *Thy bruise is incurable.* The reason God did not dare leave Judah “altogether unpunished” (see v. 11) was that the people had by this time gone too far in their sins. Verses 12–15 describe Judah’s pitiable condition. Humanly speaking, there was no hope for her. However, God promised to heal her wounds (v. 17).

13. *None to plead thy cause.* Judah had been forsaken by her lovers (see on v. 14), and now she stood alone, for she had forsaken her God.

No healing medicines. The second and third clauses of this verse read literally, “[there are] no medicines for [your] ulcer, [nor] healing for you.” This repeats the truth of v. 12 (see Isa. 1:5, 6; Hosea 5:13). Again God challenges His sinning people to seek soul salvation through their Lord, who alone is, so to speak, the balm of Gilead for the wounds of sin (see on Jer. 8:22).

14. *All thy lovers.* The allies (see on ch. 22:20) now realize that Judah’s case is helpless in the face of Babylonian opposition.

15. *Why criest thou?* A graphic picture of Judah’s pitiable, hopelessly sick and wounded condition (see Lam. 1).

Incurable. See on vs. 12, 13.

16. *They that devour thee.* Despite the fact that God used the Babylonians as His instruments to punish His people for their apostasy, the Chaldeans themselves would not escape the divine retribution because of their own iniquity (see on ch. 25:12).

17. *I will restore health.* Though Judah’s former allies would scorn her because of her misfortunes, and regard her as an outcast (see on vs. 13, 14), God would not forget His chosen nation; in His love He would heal her “wounds” (see Hosea 6:1).

18. *Bring again the captivity.* Verses 18–21 describe the prosperity that might have been Israel’s had the people accepted their divine destiny and loyally carried out the

mission assigned them by Heaven (see pp. 31, 32). For the church of God (see pp. 35, 36) these verses predict ultimate deliverance from this present evil world (see PK 538).

19. *I will multiply them.* The prophet envisions the diffusion of the knowledge of the true God and the gathering in of converts from all over the earth (see pp. 29, 30).

21. *Their nobles.* Literally, “his magnificent one,” “their prince.” The identical Hebrew word is translated “excellent” in Ps. 8:1.

22. *My people.* The Lord desired Judah to enter into the full relationship implied in this expression, but His chosen people failed to live up to their privileges. The promise now belongs to the Christian church (Heb. 8:10). In the new earth state this relationship will come to pass in its fullness (see Rev. 21:3).

23. *Whirlwind.* A graphic picture of God’s judgment descending upon impenitent sinners (see chs. 23:19, 20; 25:32, 33).

24. *Shall not return.* The deliverance of God’s people would be accompanied by the fall of the Babylonian Empire, which had held Israel captive (ch. 25:12, 26), and finally by judgment upon the wicked of all nations (ch. 25:31–33). God now announces His purpose to carry this act through to its completion.

Latter days. That is, at the time of the fulfillment of the prediction and subsequently. At the moment the future looked dark. Ahead lay invasion and deportation. The fulfillment of the glorious promises of prosperity appeared almost incredible. The future would confirm the merciful purposes of God.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

5–7GC 616; PP 201

6 GC 641; PP 340

6, 7 Ev 241; GC 630

7 Ed 181; EW 37, 272; GC 649; LS 117; PK 538, 727; SR 97, 407; 1T 353; 5T 451; 9T 15

10, 11 PK 474

11 PK 475

17 PK 474

17, 18 Ed 182

18 PK 538

CHAPTER 31

1 *The restoration of Israel.* 10 *The publication thereof.* 15 *Rahel mourning is comforted.* 18 *Ephraim repenting is brought home again.* 22 *Christ is promised.* 27 *His care over the church.* 31 *His new covenant.* 35 *The stability,* 38 *and amplitude of the church.*

1. *All the families of Israel.* Chapter 31 continues the record of what Jeremiah wrote regarding the restoration of the whole nation of Israel. This chapter, like ch. 30, was written immediately after the interchange of letters between the prophet and the exiles (see on ch. 30:2), early in the reign of Zedekiah (see on ch. 29:2).

2. *Found grace.* God assures His people in vs. 2, 3 that the evidence of His past love for them is the pledge of His future love toward them. Their forefathers escaped from the sword of the Egyptians in the Exodus, and so found “rest” through the divine deliverance.

3. *Everlasting.* See on Ex. 12:14; 21:6; 2 Kings 5:27. The prophet comforts his people by declaring that the divine love that was manifested toward their fathers is still extended toward them, for it is eternal (see Isa. 49:14–16). They cannot fail to be “drawn” toward God with the cords of His love (see Hosea 11:4), if they do not resist His grace.

4. *I will build thee.* Under God's blessing the returned exiles did restore Jerusalem and its Temple. They re-established, in some measure at least, their religious, social, and political life. However, the full measure of prosperity predicted in ch. 31 was never realized because the people turned again and again from their glorious destiny (see PK 705; pp. 30–32).

O virgin of Israel. See on ch. 14:17.

Tabrets. Heb. *tuppim*, drum-type musical instruments (see Vol. III, p. 30).

5. *Samaria.* The capital of the northern kingdom of Israel is mentioned to indicate that some who belonged to the ten tribes would also be returned from exile.

Shall eat them as common things. Literally, “they will profane,” or “they will begin to use”; “shall enjoy the fruit” (RSV). Possibly there is an allusion to the regulation referred to in Lev. 19:23–25.

6. *The watchmen.* The fact that these “watchmen” of Ephraim, the dominant tribe of the northern kingdom, will urge the people to “go up to Zion” (Jerusalem) again emphasizes what is revealed in the previous verse, that all the twelve tribes will be united in one Israel. The rival idolatrous worship set up at Bethel and Dan (see 1 Kings 12:26–33), which was designed to prevent the ten tribes of the northern kingdom from worshiping at the Temple in Jerusalem, would not be revived.

7. *Among the chief of the nations.* Or, “for the head of the nations,” referring to redeemed Israel (see Deut. 28:13; cf. Ex. 19:5, 6; Lev. 20:24, 26; Deut. 7:6; 26:18, 19).

Publish. Literally, “cause to be heard,” that is, “make proclamation of” it.

The remnant. See on Joel 2:32.

8. *North country.* See on ch. 3:18.

9. *Come with weeping.* For a partial fulfillment of this prophecy see on Ezra 3:12, 13.

Ephraim. As the most prominent of the ten northern tribes of Israel, Ephraim is employed here to represent all Israel (see Ex. 4:22; Eze. 37:19; Hosea 11:1–3).

10. *The isles afar off.* Rather “the coastlands afar off” (see Isa. 41:1; 49:1; 66:19).

12. *They shall come and sing.* In vs. 12–14 Jeremiah tells of the blessings and prosperity to come upon the returned exiles. Their present “mourning” will be transformed into eternal “joy” and “comfort” if they remain obedient to the Lord's plan for their restored nation.

15. *A voice was heard.* The prophet now contrasts by a different figure the present woe and future joy of those taken captive.

Ramah. On the location of Ramah see Additional Note on 1 Sam. 1. Although there were several places by this name, there is little doubt that the Ramah Jeremiah here mentions was the one near the tomb of Rachel, which in turn was near “the border of Benjamin at Zelzah” (1 Sam. 10:2). Ramah (probably to be identified with modern Ramallah) was on the road along which the Jewish exiles would be taken in going from Jerusalem to Babylon, and seems to have been an assembly point for the captives prior to their arduous journey into captivity (see on Jer. 40:1). The slaughter of some of the children of Israel by the Babylonians and the captivity of others, all taking place near the tomb of Rachel, reveal the appropriateness of this figure. Rachel is represented as witnessing the distress experienced by her descendants and as weeping bitterly for her children. Matthew, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, applied this passage to Herod's massacre of the children of Bethlehem (see on Matt. 2:18).

Rahel. Heb. *Rachel*, elsewhere always transliterated “Rachel” in the OT. As the mother of Joseph and Benjamin and as the favorite wife of Jacob, she is evidently here spoken of figuratively as the mother of all the children of Israel.

16. Refrain thy voice. The prophet again encourages Judah to accept the captivity that must come (see ch. 29:5–7), and by faith to look forward to the nation’s restoration.

17. In thine end. See on ch. 29:11.

Children shall come again. Primarily this refers to the return of the exiles from captivity. Secondly it refers to that time when restoration will be permanent, the time of the “restitution of all things” (Acts 3:21) at the second coming of Christ. The promises found in Jer. 31:16, 17 may well give assurance to any modern Rachel in Israel, that if she is faithful to the Lord, her little children who have been claimed by death will be restored to her by the great Life-giver on the glad resurrection morn (see GC 645; PK 239).

18. Ephraim bemoaning himself. The prophet looked forward to a time of repentance, at least on the part of some of the exiles. In their repentant state the Israelites would acknowledge that their sins merit the chastisement of God.

As a bullock. As an animal not yet trained resists the yoke in vain, so Israel found by sad experience that their refusal to yield to God’s will was like kicking “against the pricks” (Acts 9:5). However, when humble repentance overcame their stubborn hearts, their cry was, “Turn thou me, and I shall be turned; for thou art the Lord my God.”

19. After that I was turned. Israel continues the penitent attitude expressed in v. 18. Sorrow for sin is shown emphatically by the figure employed, “I smote upon my thigh” (see Luke 18:13).

20. My dear son. See v. 9. God’s heart of love goes out to Ephraim, as a father ardently loves his beloved son (see Isa. 49:14–16).

For since I spake against him. The RSV reads, “for as often as I speak against him.” Though God had to chastise His people for their sins, His love cannot let His chosen go.

My bowels. A characteristic Hebrew expression indicating strong emotion (see on ch. 4:19).

Mercy. Literally, “compassion.”

21. Set thee up waymarks. God’s appeal to Israel is so to relate herself to Him in obedience and devotion that she may follow with joy and satisfaction the signposts, as it were, that will bring her safely back to her own land (see ch. 6:16).

O virgin of Israel. See on ch. 14:17.

22. Go about. Wander about uncertainly, hesitating between obedience and apostasy (see Hosea 2:7).

Compass a man. The meaning of this clause is obscure. Scholars have offered the following conjectural suggestions: (1) that Israel, the woman, would return to her husband, Jehovah; (2) that conditions would be so peaceful that a woman would be able to perform the office of protector normally requiring a man; (3) that the woman is the virgin Mary and the man, Jesus; this was the view of the church fathers, among them Augustine; (4) that the woman represents Israel, who in her restoration would be stronger than her former conquerors.

23. As yet. Heb. ‘*od*, “again,” “once more.” Turning to the southern kingdom of Judah, the prophecy reveals that it also will be restored.

24. Husbandmen. Literally, “farmers” (see on Isa. 65:21–23).

25. *For I have satiated.* Or, “for I will satiate.” Peace and contentment are the lot of those who walk in the ways of righteousness.

26. *Upon this I awaked.* Evidently the vision of the previous verses was given to Jeremiah in his sleep (see Jer. 23:28; Joel 2:28). When he awoke and thought about the wonderful promises God gave, the dream “was sweet unto” him.

27. *I will sow.* It has ever been the divine purpose that in this earth there shall be a population of “man” and “beast,” for the glory of God and for the rejoicing of man (see Isa. 11:6–12; 65:17–25; Eze. 36:8–11; Joel 2:21–23).

28. *To pluck up.* Just as God had punished His people for their sins, so in His redemptive love He will give them peace and prosperity; He will watch over them, “to build, and to plant” (ch. 1:10).

29. *A sour grape.* Evidently the apostates of Jeremiah’s day soothed their conscience by blaming their fathers for their sufferings and woes (see on Eze. 18:2). Jeremiah, along with Ezekiel, was charged by God to inform the transgressors that guilt was an individual matter, that each man was responsible for his own deeds (see Jer. 31:30; see on Eze. 18:4).

31. *A new covenant.* The Israelites had failed to meet the divine requirements because they endeavored to be righteous through their own futile strivings. Recognizing this inherent human tendency, the Lord promised “a new covenant.” By this arrangement man becomes holy through faith in the Redeemer and Sanctifier (see Gal. 3; Heb. 8:8–10; see on Eze. 16:60). It was God’s desire that the returned exiles should enter heart and soul into this “new covenant” experience. But the nation failed to measure up to its opportunities (see pp. 29–32).

33. *Write it in their hearts.* God’s law was not to be simply an external standard of righteousness. It was to be a spring of action to guide and control human conduct (see Rom. 8:1–4; 2 Cor. 3:3–6).

34. *Shall teach no more.* The failure of God’s servants in large part to instruct the people in the real knowledge of God, because of the perfunctory performance of the observances and ceremonies of the old covenant, was to be corrected by the intimate acquaintance and fellowship believers would have with their Lord through the faith stimulated by the new covenant (see John 6:45, 46; 1 Cor. 2:6–16; Col. 1:27, 28).

35. *Ordinances of the moon.* God refers to the surety and permanence of natural law and order as a guarantee of the surety and permanence of the “everlasting covenant” (see Jer. 32:40; cf. Isa. 55:3; Eze. 37:26).

Lord of hosts. See on ch. 7:3.

36. *Seed of Israel.* This promise, not fulfilled in literal Israel (see on v. 31), will be fulfilled in spiritual Israel, now the true “seed” of Abraham (see Gal. 3:29).

37. *Can be measured.* In the same manner as the new covenant sets forth the divine stability and permanence (see vs. 35, 36), it likewise emphasizes the truth that the human intellect cannot plumb the depth of the knowledge of the divine purpose in regard to God’s people (see Rom. 11:33).

38. *City shall be built.* A divine description, in terms that would be understood by the people of that time, of the completeness of the rebuilding of Jerusalem. The “tower of Hananeel” was in the northern wall (see maps, Jerusalem and Environs in the Time of Jeremiah and Jerusalem Region), and “the gate of the corner” at the northwest corner (see Zech. 14:10); thus the new city would be complete from corner to corner.

39. Gareb. There is no other mention of either Gareb or Goath in the OT. Gareb is unidentified, but is believed to be to the south or the west of Jerusalem.

40. Valley of the dead bodies. Evidently a reference to the Valley of Hinnom (see on ch. 19:2). The “brook of Kidron” was the deep depression on the east side of the city, and the “horse gate” was “toward the east” of the Temple. All this area that was “thrown down” by the Babylonian invaders the prophet sees restored and made “holy unto the Lord.”

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1 PK 474
1–36T 125
3 COL 202; DA 480; MH 123; SC 54; 5T 632; 8T 278; 9T 167
7–9PK 474
10–14PK 475
11 8T 278
12 Ed 167; PK 409
13 DA 301
13, 14 8T 278
15–17CG 565; PK 239
16, 17 ML 352
20 8T 276
23–25PK 476
31 PP 371
31–34PK 476
33, 34 CT 454; PP 372
33–37DA 106
34 COL 204; GC 485

CHAPTER 32

1 *Jeremiah, being imprisoned by Zedekiah for his prophecy, 6 buyeth Hanameel's field. 13 Baruch must preserve the evidences, as tokens of the people's return. 16 Jeremiah in his prayer complaineth to God. 26 God confirmeth the captivity for their sins, 36 and promiseth a gracious return.*

1. The tenth year. 588/87 B.C., in the midst of the final siege of Jerusalem (see on ch. 52:4). This synchronism between the 10th year of Zedekiah and the 18th of Nebuchadnezzar is one of the most valuable in the OT for the purposes of Bible chronology (see Vol. II, p. 160).

Nebuchadnezzar. Regarding this spelling see on Jer. 21:2; Dan. 1:1.

2. Besieged Jerusalem. Zedekiah's policy of treachery and intrigue caused Nebuchadnezzar to besiege Jerusalem. It was at this time that the king of Judah, provoked to anger by Jeremiah's persistent predictions of defeat (see vs. 3–5; chs. 34:2, 3; 38:20–23), had the prophet “shut up in the court of the prison” (see Neh. 3:25). Actually, Nebuchadnezzar began to besiege Jerusalem in the 9th year of Zedekiah's reign (see on Jer. 39:1), but he had been forced temporarily to abandon the siege because of the approach of an Egyptian army (see ch. 37:5, 11). From the time of the beginning of the siege (see ch. 39:1), until the temporary lifting of the siege by the Babylonians, Jeremiah had been at liberty in the city (see on ch. 37:4). Following the prophet's attempt to return to Anathoth, and the misrepresentation of his motives by his enemies (see ch. 37:11–14),

Jeremiah was imprisoned “in the house of Jonathan the scribe” (ch. 37:15). At the prisoner’s request the king had taken Jeremiah from there to “the court of the prison, which was in the king of Judah’s house,” perhaps in order that the prophet would be readily available for consultation as to the probable result of the siege (see ch. 37:20, 21).

3. Wherefore dost thou prophesy? It is to be noted that the prophecy quoted in vs. 3–5 was uttered by Jeremiah at an earlier time, and is here referred to by Zedekiah as the reason for putting him in prison. The delivery of this message to Zedekiah is recorded in ch. 34:2, 3.

4. Behold his eyes. This is significant in view of Ezekiel’s prophecy (see on Eze. 12:13). Nebuchadnezzar put “out Zedekiah’s eyes” (see Jer. 39:7), and so the Babylonian conqueror’s face, which struck terror because of its wrath, was one of the last objects the king of Judah was to see on earth (see Jer. 52:10, 11; cf. 2 Kings 25:6, 7).

5. There shall he be. Zedekiah, blinded and miserable, lived out his final years in prison in Babylon (see ch. 52:11). The fact that he was not mentioned when Evil-Merodach released Jehoiachin from prison (see ch. 52:31) would seem to indicate that by that time Zedekiah was dead.

Visit. See on Ps. 8:4; 59:5.

7. Hanameel. Beyond his being the prophet’s first cousin (see vs. 8, 9), nothing is revealed in the Bible about Hanameel. Since up to “the year of jubile” land could be sold, a person’s next of kin was given the first opportunity to exercise “the right of redemption” (Jer. 32:7; see on Lev. 25:23–25; Ruth 3:12; 4:1–6).

Buy thee my field. Through Jeremiah’s purchase of land in Anathoth, the prophet gave an indisputable proof of his belief in God’s message that, though the Israelites were to be carried away into captivity, they would return to their own land and fields (see v. 44). This incident had a parallel in the history of Rome when the patriotic citizens of that city bought land at the full market value at the very time when Hannibal, the Carthaginian conqueror, was marching toward the capital on the Tiber (see Livy xxvi. 11).

8. Buy it for thyself. Hanameel’s field was probably already under the control of the armies that were then besieging Jerusalem (see on v. 2). This alone was sufficient to induce Hanameel to sell his field. In addition, it may be that Hanameel felt that, because of Jeremiah’s urging to submit to Nebuchadnezzar, there would be a strong likelihood that the Chaldeans would protect the prophet and his interests.

9. Seventeen shekels of silver. This amount, in its Babylonian equivalent, would have a purchasing power of one ox or about nine sheep or goats (see Vol. I, p. 169).

10. Evidence. That is, the deed of conveyance. It was “sealed” to protect it against any unauthorized alterations. All was done in strict legal form, to give added force to the acted parable.

Weighed. Or, “paid.” Since in ancient times metal money was evaluated more as bullion than as coinage, it was “weighed” (see Gen. 23:16; Zech. 11:12).

11. Sealed ... open. The former may have been the original “evidence of the purchase” and the latter the duplicate. Or the “sealed” document may have contained details that were of no concern to the “witnesses” (see vs. 10, 11).

12. Baruch. On the history of this important scribe see p. 343.

Before all the Jews. This shows that Jeremiah was not placed in close confinement, but was in the court of the prison (see v. 2). This acted parable, carried out in the presence of many witnesses, would soon be known throughout the city. By this act of

apparent folly, the prophet emphasized the certainty of his prediction that the people, though carried away captive by the Babylonians, would be returned to their own land (see v. 15).

14. Earthen vessel. It was not uncommon for the ancients to place their most precious treasures in such containers (see 2 Cor. 4:7), for such vessels were a better protection against dampness and decay than those made of wood. The famous Dead Sea scrolls were preserved in such jars (see Vol. I, pp. 31–34).

Continue many days. A warning that the captives were not to expect a speedy return to their homeland.

15. Possessed again. The prophet himself could never hope to receive personal benefit from his purchase. He was no longer young, and he himself had predicted that the time of captivity would last for 70 years. However, the prophet held before the people in parable the glorious hope of a return from the land of exile.

16. I prayed. Jeremiah now begins one of the most earnest intercessions for the people of God we have recorded in the Bible (see Ezra 9:5–15; Isa. 37:16–20; Dan. 9:3–19).

17. Nothing too hard. God's omnipotence furnishes the basis of the prophet's humble but earnest petition (see Gen. 18:14; Jer. 32:27).

18. Lovingkindness. Heb. *chesed*, "divine love" (see Additional Note on Psalm 36). This verse presents the two foundations of the divine rule: God's love and grace, and His justice (see Ex. 20:6; 34:6, 7; Ps. 85:10; Ps. 89:14).

Lord of hosts. See on ch. 7:3.

19. Great in counsel. This ascription, together with the previous one, "the Mighty God," uses a wording similar to that recorded by Isaiah in one of his great prophecies of Christ (see Isa. 9:6).

According to his ways. See Jer. 17:10; Matt. 16:27; 2 Cor. 5:10.

20. Even unto this day. The meaning is either that the "signs and wonders" God wrought in Egypt when He delivered His people were still vivid in the minds of the people of Jeremiah's time or that "signs and wonders" begun in Egypt had continued till the present.

Other. Perhaps this supplied word is better omitted. The reference is to men in general.

24. The mounts. That is, the towers or banks that were used in siege operations (see on ch. 6:6). As predicted by Jeremiah, the Babylonians were even then besieging Jerusalem. The towering assault works were visible to the inhabitants of the doomed city. It was impossible for the Israelites to escape the sufferings "of the sword, and of the famine, and of the pestilence."

25. And thou hast said. The words seem to reflect a questioning tone. In the face of the Babylonian assault against Judah and Jerusalem it was pardonably difficult for the prophet to understand the divine command to purchase "the field for money, and take witnesses."

27. Any thing too hard. God would strengthen Jeremiah's faith and confirm his confidence in obeying the command to buy the field (see v. 17).

28. Nebuchadrezzar. Regarding this spelling see on Jer. 21:2; Dan. 1:1.

29. Upon whose roofs. See on ch. 19:13. The very places where the inhabitants of Jerusalem "offered incense unto Baal, and poured out drink offerings unto other gods"

would witness the divine judgment and retribution. Instead of the “incense” of their idolatry ascending into heaven, the smoke of burning ruins would rise to the sky as a witness to the people’s wickedness.

31. They built it. Jerusalem was a Jebusite city before David took it (2 Sam. 5:6–10). It was subsequently rebuilt and enlarged. However, the idolatry of Judah’s kings made it the source of continual provocation.

32. Priests, and their prophets. Again the spiritual leaders are singled out and indicted as a class (see on ch. 2:8), along with the civil leaders and the people.

33. The back. A gesture of contempt and aversion (see chs. 2:27; 7:24; 18:17).

Rising up early. For comment see on ch. 7:13.

34. Abominations. The abominations concerning worship of idols mentioned in this and the following verse had been committed by Ahaz (2 Chron. 28:1–4) and repeated by Manasseh (2 Kings 21:1–9; 2 Chron. 33:1–9) after Hezekiah had cleansed the Temple of these iniquitous practices (2 Chron. 29). Later Josiah endeavored to stamp out idolatry (2 Kings 22; 23; 2 Chron. 34:25), but it seems evident that idolatry still persisted after his death.

Called by my name. See Jer. 7:10, 11, 14, 30; see on Deut. 28:10.

35. High places. The heights upon which idolatry was practiced (see 2 Kings 17:9–11; 2 Chron. 31:1).

Hinnom. See on chs. 7:29, 31; 19:2.

37. I will gather them. See on ch. 29:10, 11. For the conditional nature of these promises see p. 34.

38. My people. In vs. 38–40 God repeats His promise of the new “covenant” (ch. 31:31–34).

41. Plant them. A figure of speech suggesting security and permanence.

42. This great evil. See on ch. 11:11.

43. Fields shall be bought. To the despairing Israelites who felt that the Babylonians would deprive them of their land forever, the assurance was given that their descendants would again possess the fields of Judah. Jeremiah’s transaction of buying the field of Anathoth was a prophetic confirmation, as it were, of this assurance (see on v. 15).

Without man or beast. As the besieged inhabitants of Jerusalem viewed the desolation wrought by the Chaldeans upon their beloved land of Judah, they gave vent to their feelings in these vivid words. Already Jeremiah’s prediction of desolation to come upon the land (ch. 4:25; see on ch. 4:20, 23) was fulfilled before the eyes of the people.

44. South. The geographical features here noted describe the well-known area of the land of Judah (see Joshua 15). This particular reference seems to make no mention of the land that formerly belonged to the northern kingdom of Israel.

Their captivity. Lest anyone miss the point of the acted parable the Lord proclaims the certainty of return from captivity. The very fact that the Lord had foretold the Captivity, which had now come to pass, confirmed the promise of return.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1–44PK 466–472

8–10PK 466

14, 15 PK 469

17–23PK 470

19 8T 250

24–27PK 471
35 PP 337
37–44PK 472

CHAPTER 33

1 *God promiseth to the captivity a gracious return, 9 a joyful state, 12 a settled government, 15 Christ the Branch of righteousness, 17 a continuance of kingdom and priesthood, 20 and a stability of a blessed seed.*

1. Yet shut up. The prophet is still in the place of his imprisonment mentioned in ch. 32 (see on ch. 32:2).

2. The maker thereof. That is, of the earth as understood by implication (see Jer. 10:11; cf. Isa. 45:18).

The Lord. Heb. *Yahweh*, the sacred Tetragrammaton (see Vol. I, pp. 171–173).

3. Mighty things. “incomprehensible things.”

4. Thrown down. See on ch. 32:24.

5. They come to fight. The Israelites sally forth against the Babylonians, only to be repulsed at the cost of many “dead bodies of men” (see on ch. 32:24).

6. Health and cure. God now turns from a consideration of the chastisement of His people to a promise of their restoration, when they will have “the abundance of peace and truth.” Verses 6–26 present a vivid picture of the glory that might have been Israel’s after the return from captivity if the people had heeded the light from Heaven and had cooperated with God in the carrying out of His plans and purposes for the salvation of the world. Unfortunately they turned again and again from their glorious destiny and so realized only in a small measure the blessedness here predicted. With the transfer of the promises to spiritual Israel many of the forecasts will see a fulfillment in principle in the Christian church (see pp. 25–38).

7. Of Israel. Israel, as well as Judah, is included in the promise of a return from exile.

8. Cleanse them. The enjoyment of temporal blessings was dependent upon meeting certain spiritual requirements (see p. 27). In order to experience the glory portrayed in vs. 6–26 it would be necessary for Israel to forsake her sins. For those who genuinely repented, God held out the promise of pardon, full and free. Men were not to be discouraged by the magnitude of their past transgressions, thinking that their case was hopeless. Not only would God forgive their sins, He would also supply grace for future obedience (Eze. 36:25–28).

9. A name of joy. Although Israel had grievously sinned, God had not withdrawn any of His promises of favor. These were, of course, conditional on obedience. It was possible for Israel after the Captivity to attain to the full glory promised the ancient people (see pp. 31, 32). Through Zechariah the assurance was given, “They shall be as though I had not cast them off” (Zech. 10:6). Thus it is also in the spiritual realm. No matter how far a man may have departed from the path of rectitude, he may be accepted before God as if he had not sinned (SC 62).

10. Without man. See on ch. 32:43.

11. The voice of joy. A repetition of the promised joys of the restoration that will come to God’s people. The very sounds of joy that would disappear during the Exile (see on ch. 7:34) would now be heard again in the land.

Sacrifice of praise. See Jonah 2:9; Heb. 13:14, 15.

13. South. See on ch. 32:44.

14. I will perform. See on ch. 23:5–7.

15. Branch of righteousness. See Isa. 11:1; see on Zech. 3:8; 6:12.

16. This is the name. Although v. 16 repeats the prediction of ch. 23:6, it differs from that reference in that here the city is called “The Lord our righteousness.” If Jerusalem had only lived up to what God designed that it should be, its future would have been most glorious (see p. 30).

17. David shall never. This repeats the promise of 2 Sam. 7:16; 1 Kings 2:4; Ps. 89:20, 29, 35, 36. See on 1 Kings 2:4.

18. Meat offerings. That is, “meal offerings,” or “cereal offerings” (see Vol. I, pp. 703, 704).

20. Covenant of the day. Again, as previously, God guarantees the surety of His “covenant” with His people by referring to the surety of natural law (see on ch. 31:35).

22. Host of heaven. The infinite number of the heavenly bodies is used to illustrate the great multitude who will be accounted the “seed of David.”

24. What this people have spoken. Some commentators have understood this passage to be the taunt of the heathen at the seeming downfall of “the two families,” which these commentators interpret to be the two kingdoms of the Israelites, Israel and Judah (see Eze. 35:10; 36:19, 20). Others interpret “this people” to be the Israelites themselves (see Jer. 4:10; 5:14, 23; 6:19), who in their faithlessness had given way to despair (chs. 32:42, 43; 33:10), because even “the two families,” the family of David and of Levi (ch. 33:21, 22), seem to have been forsaken by God.

25. If my covenant. God meets this despair by holding up the surety of natural law as proof of the surety of His promises toward His people (see on v. 20).

26. Seed of Jacob. Some suggest that the “two families” (v. 24) may be the house of Jacob and the house of David. God gives His answer to the disdainful taunt of the heathen or to the utterance of discouragement on the part of His people (see on v. 24). He promises to return them to their own land and to restore their former glory (see on v. 9).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1–14PK 472–474

1 PK 472

2–96T 228

2–12PK 473

3 Ed 127, 282; ML 23; 8T 335

13, 14 PK 474

16 MB 106; 6T 228

17, 18 AA 223

CHAPTER 34

1 *Jeremiah prophesieth the captivity of Zedekiah and the city.* 8 *The princes and the people having dismissed their bondservants, contrary to the covenant of God, reassume them.* 12 *Jeremiah, for their disobedience, giveth them and Zedekiah into the hands of their enemies.*

1. When Nebuchadnezzar. This chapter begins by relating events that evidently took place at the beginning of the final siege of Jerusalem, while the prophet was still at liberty, for the prophecy here delivered to Zedekiah (vs. 2, 3) was quoted by the king as the reason for imprisoning Jeremiah (see on ch. 32:2).

3. Behold the eyes. See on ch. 32:4.

4. Not die by the sword. This assurance was very likely given to Zedekiah to persuade him to cease resisting the Babylonians and to come to terms with Nebuchadnezzar. Though Zedekiah would be taken captive to Babylon, submission on his part would secure for him a peaceful life and an honorable burial.

5. Burnings of thy fathers. This is apparently a reference to the spices and perfumes that were burned at the burial of kings and high-ranking individuals (2 Chron. 16:14; 21:18, 19). There is no allusion here to cremation, which the Jews almost never practiced.

They will lament thee. Contrast this with the prediction Jeremiah made regarding the burial of Jehoiakim (ch. 22:18, 19). Zedekiah is assured that no such dishonorable end would be his if he would only yield to Babylon.

7. Lachish. This city is mentioned because, next to Jerusalem, it was one of the strongest defenses of Judah (2 Kings 18:13, 14, 17; 2 Chron. 32:9), and because it and Azekah longest resisted Nebuchadnezzar. In 1935 and 1938, 21 letters written in ink on ostraca, or potsherds (see Vol. I, pp. 123, 125; Vol. II, pp. 97, 98), were discovered in the ruins of Lachish. Several of these were written by a certain Hoshaiach, evidently an officer stationed nearby, to Yaosh, the commander of Lachish, preceding the Babylonian invasion. They vividly reveal the unsettled condition of the country on the eve of Judah's downfall. One letter states: "And let (my lord) know that we are watching for the signals of Lachish, according to all the indications which my lord hath given, for we cannot see Azekah" (W. F. Albright, trans., in J. B. Pritchard, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts* [Princeton: University Press, 1950], p. 322). The vehemence with which Lachish was soon after destroyed is evidenced by the fact that so fiercely was the city burned that much of the brickwork of the wall was turned a bright red. These finds at Lachish may reflect the severity of the destruction that befell Jerusalem at the same time. The ruins are now called *Tell ed-Duweir*.

Azekah. This also was one of the "fenced cities" of Judah (2 Chron. 11:5–12). The site is now called *Tell ez-Zakariyeh*.

8. To proclaim liberty. While the Mosaic law permitted the Israelites to be placed only under a limited time bondage (see on Ex. 21:2), many masters had exceeded their rights. The nobles of Judah, like those of Athens before Solon, applied the law of debt so as to place a large number of their fellows in slavery. Now, under the pressing danger of the Babylonian attack, either to assure his receiving the willing cooperative service of freemen instead of the forced help of slaves, or for some other reason, Zedekiah promised freedom to all those in slavery in Jerusalem.

10. They obeyed. In view of the dangers that threatened from without, and the danger that an oppressed class of people might rise up to assist an invader (see Ex. 1:10), Zedekiah's order to free the slaves met with general compliance on the part of princes and people.

11. But afterward they turned. When the Chaldeans temporarily raised the siege to meet the Egyptian army that was approaching (see v. 21; ch. 37:5), causing most of the inhabitants of Jerusalem to believe vainly that the danger to their city was passed, they again "brought them into subjection for servants and for handmaids."

14. At the end of seven years. This was the law (see on Ex. 21:2) the people had violated (Jer. 34:8–11; see Isa. 58:6).

15. A covenant before me. This agreement to free the slaves was solemnly entered into by the king and by "all the princes, and all the people" (vs. 8–10) in the Temple

courts, and so was made, in a sense, with God Himself (see Neh. 5:8–13). Therefore, in breaking this “covenant,” the people transgressed not only against their fellows but also against their God.

Called by my name. See Jer. 7:10, 11; see on Deut. 12:5.

17. I proclaim a liberty. The God-ordained freedom (Lev. 25:10) the people denied to their fellows would be turned by God’s judgment into a “liberty” that would leave the transgressors “to the sword, to the pestilence, and to the famine,” and also to the Captivity.

18. Cut the calf in twain. For the significance of this ritual see on Gen. 15:10.

19. Eunuchs. Often these were of foreign birth (see on ch. 38:7), who became proselytes when entering the service of the king. It was not uncommon for eunuchs to hold high position in Oriental courts, and those mentioned here, like the princes of Judah and Jerusalem, had probably made themselves rich by lending money to the poorer Israelites and then making them slave to secure compensation.

20. For meat. This dishonor was considered an extreme punishment for transgression (see chs. 16:4; 19:7).

21. From you. Literally, “from against you.” This shows, as indicated before (see on v. 11), that the Babylonians had raised the siege of Jerusalem, giving the princes of Jerusalem the false idea that danger had passed, and the false hope that help was coming from Egypt (ch. 37:5–10).

22. With fire. See ch. 52:12–14.

Without an inhabitant. See on ch. 32:43.

CHAPTER 35

¹ *By the obedience of the Rechabites, 12 Jeremiah condemneth the disobedience of the Jews. 18 God blesseth the Rechabites for their obedience.*

1. In the days of Jehoiakim. The experience recorded in ch. 35 occurred in an earlier period of Jeremiah’s ministry, shortly before the Babylonians came against Jerusalem (see PK 423).

2. Rechabites. The founder of this family was Jonadab, or Jehonadab (v. 6), who lived in the days of Jehu, king of Samaria (841–814 B.C.), about 240 years earlier. It is evident that his influence was so great that Jehu was glad to have him on his side, and Jonadab was equally glad to be with Jehu because of his “zeal for the Lord” (see 2 Kings 10:15, 16). Jonadab insisted that his followers adopt a strict manner of living.

4. Into the chamber. These rooms, or apartments, attached to the Temple (1 Kings 6:5) were apparently assigned to important priests or prophets; here to “the sons of Hanan.” The phrase, “man of God,” implies that the one so named was a prophet (see 1 Sam. 2:27; 1 Kings 13:1; 20:28; 2 Kings 4:7, 9).

The princes. Undoubtedly some official, nonpriestly dignitaries, who made the Temple precincts their permanent place of abode (see ch. 36:10).

Maaseiah. Probably the father of Zephaniah, “the second [or deputy] priest” (chs. 21:1; 29:25; 52:24).

6. We will drink no wine. Throughout life the Rechabites were like the Nazirites (see on Num. 6:2–5), a separate people, living apart from cities and refraining from holding property.

11. When Nebuchadrezzar. For the spelling, see on Dan. 1:1. Apologetically the Rechabites explained that they were forced to come temporarily to the city of Jerusalem

with the other country dwellers of Judah, because of the Babylonian invasion (Jer. 4:6; 8:14; cf. 2 Kings 24:1, 2).

13. Lord of hosts. See on ch. 7:3.

Receive instruction. In striking contrast to the Rechabites, who had persisted faithfully for centuries in obeying the rule of their father, Jonadab, “the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem,” though purporting to be the children of God, persistently refused “to hearken” to divine counsel (see on chs. 7:13).

15. Rising up early. See on ch. 7:13.

17. Because I have spoken. That this complaint of the Lord is justified is repeatedly stated by many of God’s teachers and prophets (see Prov. 1:24; Isa. 65:12; 66:4; Jer. 7:13; 25:4–7; etc.)

18. Because ye have obeyed. What God is particularly commending here is the constancy and faithfulness the Rechabites exhibited in holding to a human law.

19. Not want a man. Such promises are, of course, conditional on the continued fidelity of the descendants (see on 1 Kings 2:4). The loyalty of the sons of Rechad to the abstemious life enjoined upon them was a stern rebuke to the apostate and profligate people of Judah as a whole.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1–19PK 423–425; 4T 174–176

6 PK 423; 4T 174

12–14PK 423; 4T 174

14, 15 4T 164

14–17PK 424

14–194T 175

17 4T 164

18, 19 PK 425

CHAPTER 36

1 *Jeremiah causeth Baruch to write his prophecy, 5 and publickly to read it. 11 The princes, having intelligence thereof by Michaiah, send Jehudi to fetch the roll, and read it. 19 They will Baruch to hide himself and Jeremiah. 20 The king Jehoiakim, being certified thereof, heareth part of it, and burneth the roll. 27 Jeremiah denounceth his judgment. 32 Baruch writeth a new copy.*

1. Fourth year of Jehoiakim. That is, about 604 B.C. (see on ch. 25:1). After Jeremiah delivered the straightforward message recorded in ch. 19, the prophet was seized and imprisoned (see ch. 20). It was during and after this imprisonment that the events of ch. 36 occurred (see PK 432–437).

2. A roll. That is, “a scroll.” This was doubtless made of leather, sometimes popularly called parchment, though real parchment did not come into use until the 2d century B.C. (see Vol. I, pp. 30, 31).

All the nations. This verse sets forth in a sentence the contents of ch. 25.

3. It may be. At this time there was still a hope, though a slim one, that Judah might repent.

4. Baruch. On the identity of Baruch see p. 343.

5. I am shut up. Jeremiah was still a prisoner (see on v. 1; see PK 432).

6. Go thou, and read. Since Jeremiah was restricted from going “into the house of the Lord,” Baruch was called upon not only to be the prophet’s secretary but also to be the preacher of Jeremiah’s divinely inspired messages.

Upon the fasting day. This occasion was not a regular yearly fast (see on v. 9), but one of those special occasions “proclaimed” in time of national crisis (2 Chron. 20:1–3; Joel 2:15). It was a time when a large number of people would be gathered together, and be in a frame of mind to listen to a divine admonition and an appeal for repentance. It is possible that Jehoiakim, on the advice of his apostate priests and false prophets, called this fast to arouse the people to greater resistance against the Babylonians.

9. In the fifth year. This was the year following the command of the Lord (see on v. 1).

In the ninth month. The reading of the roll was in the winter, in the month that began in November or December. Since the regnal years of the kings of Judah seem to have begun in the autumn (see Vol. II, pp. 110, 140, 146), this reading could have taken place as early as two or three months after the writing began.

10. Gemariah. His father was probably that Shaphan who took a leading part in rebuilding the Temple in the reign of Josiah (2 Kings 22:3–6), and in publishing the newly found “book of the law” (2 Kings 22; 23). It is quite evident from these facts that Shaphan was one of the leaders in the revival of the true worship of God. It is small wonder that his sons were supporters of Jeremiah. One of them, Ahikam, protected the prophet (see on Jer. 26:24), and now another, Gemariah, permits Baruch to read “the words of Jeremiah” in his chamber.

The new gate. Some believe that this may have been a prominent part of the reconstruction work completed by Hilkiah and Shaphan (2 Kings 22:3–6).

11. Son of Gemariah. See on v. 10.

12. Into the king’s house. It is likely that Michaiah did this purposely in order to see to it that the king and his princely counselors would know the words of Jeremiah.

14. Sent Jehudi. The princes were evidently not satisfied with a mere hearsay report of such an important matter, and so sent Jehudi to bring Baruch to their council to verify the report of Michaiah (see vs. 11–13).

17. How didst thou write? The princes anxiously desired to know who was responsible for the prophet’s message. Did Baruch use his own words in expressing the prophet’s thoughts, or were they the very words of Jeremiah himself? Baruch’s answer revealed that the words were indeed those of Jeremiah (v. 18).

18. He pronounced. In modern terminology we would say that the prophet dictated his messages to his secretary.

With ink. On the composition of ancient inks see Vol. I, p. 31.

19. Go, hide thee. When or how Jeremiah was released (see on v. 1) so as to enable him to hide, we are not informed.

20. They laid up the roll. Some have suggested that this was done because Jeremiah and Baruch could legally be prosecuted only upon the indisputable evidence of the scroll itself. Evidently the princes entertained the hope that the king would not go that far. However, in this they were disappointed (see vs. 23, 26).

22. The winterhouse. Probably a special apartment in the southern wing of the palace (see Amos 3:15). Since this was in the month of Kislev, or Chisleu (our November–December; see Vol. II, p. 116), it was necessary to have a fire in order to provide warmth.

23. Leaves. The separate sheets of writing material were usually fastened together to make a roll (see Vol. I, p. 31).

25. Had made intercession. Three of the princes (see v. 12), Elnathan, Delaiah, and Gemariah, had the courage to urge the king not to burn the scroll, but he would not listen to them.

26. The son of Hammelech. Or, “the son of the king.” Jerahmeel must have been the king’s “son” only in the sense of belonging to the “royal house” (see Esther 1:9), for Jehoiakim was only 25 years old “when he began to reign” (2 Kings 23:36), and so at this time could not have had a son old enough to carry out his command.

The Lord hid them. Though Jeremiah and Baruch had hid themselves (see on v. 19), it was divine providence that kept the king from finding them.

27. Then the word of the Lord came. Probably while the prophet and Baruch were hidden (vs. 19, 26).

28. All the former words. The second roll was to lack nothing contained in the first roll (see v. 32).

29. Man and beast. Evidently Jehoiakim objected most strenuously to that phase of Jeremiah’s message which predicted that the desolation of Judah by the king of Babylon would be so complete that the land would become virtually uninhabited (see on chs. 4:25; 32:43).

30. He shall have none. The divine prediction of doom upon Judah and Jerusalem now focuses upon Jehoiakim himself. While actually he was followed on the throne by his son Jehoiachin (2 Kings 24:6), the youthful Jehoiachin ruled only three months (2 Kings 24:8). The next king, Zedekiah, was Josiah’s third son (see 1 Chron. 3:15; see on 2 Kings 24:17), and the last king to reign over the southern kingdom of the Jews.

His dead body. See on ch. 22:18, 19.

32. There were added. Not only was the message of the first roll written out, but there were additional similar messages recorded in the second roll.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1–32PK 432–437; 4T 176–181

2, 3 4T 176

2–4PK 432

3 PK 435; 4T 178

4–84T 177

5–9, 14–22PK 433

15–254T 177

23–26PK 434

26–294T 178

28, 30, 31 PK 436

30–324T 179

32 PK 437

CHAPTER 37

1 *The Egyptians having raised the siege of the Chaldeans, king Zedekiah sendeth to Jeremiah to pray for the people. 6 Jeremiah prophesieth the Chaldeans’ certain return and victory. 11 He is taken for a fugitive, beaten, and put in prison. 16 He assureth Zedekiah of the captivity. 18 Intreating for his liberty, he obtaineth some favour.*

1. And king Zedekiah. Chapters 37–44 give a continuous account of the later life and fortunes of Jeremiah, beginning with the coming of the last king of Judah to the throne (2 Kings 24:17, 18).

Coniah. See on ch. 22:24.

Nebuchadrezzar. Regarding this spelling see on Jer. 21:2; Dan. 1:1.

Made king. Zedekiah was a puppet king of the Babylonians, yet at the same time a legitimate heir to the throne. He was no doubt required to take an oath of allegiance to Nebuchadnezzar, but within a few years violated that oath by entering into an alliance with various neighbor nations against Babylon. Zedekiah and his counselors thus invited the tragedy of 586 B.C.

2. But neither he. In view of the history of the latter part of his reign that follows, this is a prefatory statement of the general character of Zedekiah's rule.

It seems that Zedekiah, personally at least, believed in Jeremiah as a true prophet. Although it is not so stated, the context implies that Jeremiah responded to the king's request for prayer (v. 3). At least, according to the record (v. 5), it seems to have been soon after this request that the Egyptian army withdrew from Jerusalem. Somewhat later Zedekiah had a secret interview with the prophet, at which he seems to have revealed at least a secret fear, if not a profound conviction, that Jeremiah was an inspired messenger.

If these observations have validity, it would appear that Zedekiah's decisions reflect vacillation more than they do outright doubt or unbelief. The readiness with which Zedekiah complied with the request of the princes by casting Jeremiah into the dungeon of Malchiah (see ch. 38:4–6), only to remove him from the dungeon at the suggestion of one of the royal eunuchs (vs. 7–13), suggests that if Zedekiah had only possessed the courage of his convictions the fate of Jerusalem might have been much different.

3. Jehucal. Or, Jucal (see ch. 38:1).

7

Zephaniah. These two men, Jehucal and Zephaniah, were members of the party opposed to Babylon, and so were unfriendly to the prophet (chs. 21:1, 2; 29:25; 38:16).

Lord our God. These words may indicate not only that they were carrying out the king's command but that they hoped to win Jeremiah to their side by a display of religious zeal for the Lord (see ch. 21:1, 2).

4. Not put him into prison. Jeremiah was not imprisoned until the final siege of Jerusalem, during the 10th year of Zedekiah (see on ch. 32:1, 2), although the siege actually began in his 9th year (ch. 39:1).

5. Then Pharaoh's army. This incident was doubtless the outgrowth of the agreement between Hophra (called Apries by the Greeks) and Zedekiah to resist Nebuchadnezzar (see on Eze. 17:15). The Egyptian armies were generally well equipped with chariots and horses (Eze. 17:15; see Isa. 31:1), and capable of carrying out siege operations (Eze. 17:17).

7. Shall return. Zedekiah's appeal for Egyptian help broke his "covenant" with the Chaldeans (Eze. 17:17, 18). The Egyptians' approach, like Tirhakah's during the

⁷Nichol, F. D. (1978). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary : The Holy Bible with exegetical and expository comment*. Commentary Reference Series (Je 24:1). Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association.

Assyrian invasion (2 Kings 19:9; Isa. 37:9), resulted in nothing more than a temporary suspension of hostilities around Jerusalem.

8. Chaldeans shall come again. After Nebuchadnezzar repulsed the attempt of Apries he returned to his attack upon Jerusalem, captured it, and utterly destroyed it (2 Kings 25:1–10; 2 Chron. 36:17–19).

9. Deceive not yourselves. Vain were the hopes of the king of Judah and his counselors that Egypt would be able to save them from the Babylonians.

10. Remained but wounded. A graphic figure illustrating the certainty of Jerusalem's doom. In view of the fast-approaching destruction of the Temple, some of the righteous in Jerusalem determined to place the sacred ark beyond the reach of the ruthless hands of the invading armies (see on ch. 27:19). The present interlude in the final siege, during which the Babylonians temporarily lifted the siege to meet the threat of an advancing army from Egypt (see on ch. 32:2), afforded these pious men the needed opportunity to hide the ark. With mourning and sadness they secretly carried the ark to a safe hiding place in a cave, where it is "yet hidden. It has never been disturbed since it was secreted" (PK 453). Within the ark were the tables of stone on which God had written the Ten Commandments with His own finger (Deut. 10:1–5). See EGW, Supplementary Material, on Ex. 31:18.

11. Broken up. The camp of the Chaldeans was "broken up," that is, the armies had withdrawn from the siege.

12. Then Jeremiah went forth. Jeremiah considered his work to be done, after long years of faithful ministry, and now he attempted to retire to his home village of Anathoth (see PK 453).

To separate himself. The Hebrew here is obscure. The RSV reads, "to receive his portion." Jeremiah had property in Anathoth in "the land of Benjamin" (ch. 32:6–12), and his visit there may have been with reference to this property.

13. Gate of Benjamin. This is usually identified with the Sheep Gate in the northeast corner of Jerusalem.

Irijah. Probably the brother of Jehucal (see v. 3).

Thou fallest away. Apparently Irijah's charge that Jeremiah was guilty of treachery was based upon the supposition that the prophet intended to slip away to the Babylonian camp to join the enemy.

15. The princes were wroth. The raising of the siege of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans because of the Egyptian approach (see on v. 5) undoubtedly strengthened and made more aggressive the anti-Babylonian party.

16. Cabins. Literally, "vaulted rooms," provided for the incarceration of individual prisoners. That Jeremiah had a difficult time in his prison cell is hinted at in his later appeal that he be not returned there (see v. 20; ch. 38:26).

Remained there many days. The prophet must have been in this particular dungeon for several weeks. The total length of his final imprisonment was about one year.

17. The king sent. Not approving of the prophet's harsh treatment, and yet seemingly afraid of his counselors, the weak-willed Zedekiah "secretly" summoned Jeremiah, still hoping that through the prophet he might receive some favorable "word from the Lord."

Thou shalt be delivered. Courageously, and without yielding to the temptation to modify his message in order to escape further persecution from his enemies, the elderly

prophet repeats with abrupt sternness his former prediction that Zedekiah would be taken by the Babylonians (see ch. 32:1–5).

19. *Where are now your prophets?* These impostors had grossly deceived the king. Instead of Jerusalem being delivered as they claimed (see ch. 28:1–4), the city was besieged; and the temporary withdrawal of the Chaldeans, which seemed to justify their hopes, only emphasized the deceptiveness of these men.

20. *Lest I die there.* See on v. 16.

21. *Into the court.* This was in response to Jeremiah's own request (v. 20). Except during the incident mentioned in ch. 38:6, the prophet remained there in the court of "the king of Judah's house" (see chs. 32:2; 33:1), which was above ground, with good light and air, till the city was taken by the Babylonians.

A piece of bread. Literally, "a round loaf of bread." The king's command shows that Jerusalem was already besieged and that the food supply was therefore low.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1–21PK 452–455; 4T 181, 182

1–34T 181

3, 5 PK 452

5, 9, 10 4T 181

9–13PK 453

12–154T 181

14, 15 PK 454

17 4T 181

17–20PK 454

18–214T 182

21 PK 455

CHAPTER 38

1 *Jeremiah, by a false suggestion, is put into the dungeon of Malchiah. 7 Ebed-melech, by suit, getteth him some enlargement. 14 Upon secret conference he counselleth the king by yielding to save his life. 24 By the king's instructions he concealeth the conference from the princes.*

1. *Gedaliah.* He must be distinguished from the man with the same name who was the son of Ahikam, Jeremiah's protector (see ch. 26:24; 39:14). Regarding Jucal, or Jehucal, and Pashur see chs. 21:1; 37:3. These four princes were among the foremost opponents of Jeremiah.

4. *Put to death.* The princes refused to accept the message of Jeremiah. They looked upon the prophet as a traitor, one that would desert to the Babylonians for personal safety. Compare ch. 37:11–15. They asked for the extreme penalty against Jeremiah.

5. *He is in your hand.* Zedekiah, whose weak character and vacillating spirit made it impossible for him to resist, gave his reluctant consent to the demand of his determined princes.

6. *Dungeon.* Literally, "pit," or "cistern." Malchiah is probably the one mentioned in v. 1. Hammelech means "the king." Malchiah probably was "the son of the king" in the sense that he was a member of the royal house (see on ch. 36:26).

No water, but mire. Either the water of the cistern had been cut off because of the siege or this may have been in October or November, when there would be little water left after the dry season (see Vol. II, p. 110). At any rate, nothing but a deposit of foul

mud remained in the cistern. Evidently the princes feared the effect upon the people if they publicly executed Jeremiah (see on vs. 4, 5). Therefore the prophet was lowered into the cistern to remain there until he died of starvation (v. 9). It is very likely that in Lam. 3:53–55 Jeremiah is referring to this time of misery and suffering.

7. *Ebed-melech*. Literally, “a king’s servant.” Inasmuch as the word is without the article in the Hebrew text, it is probably a proper name, and is so translated in the LXX and the Vulgate. Little is revealed about Ebed-melech, but it is plain from the narrative that he was close to the king as one of his favorites (see on v. 8), and that he used his influence fearlessly to protect Jeremiah.

Gate of Benjamin. This is usually identified with the Sheep Gate in the northeast corner of Jerusalem.

8. *Out of the king’s house.* An indication of the close relationship between Ebed-melech and the king.

9. *These men have done evil.* Some LXX MSS read, “thou hast done evil,” thus placing the responsibility and the blame upon the king himself.

No more bread. The siege of Jerusalem was reaching its final, desperate stages.

10. *Thirty men.* This seemingly large number may have been provided to meet any resistance to the prophet’s release that the princes might offer. One Hebrew MS has 3 in place of 30.

The apparent ease with which Zedekiah made a decision, only to revoke it a little later, testifies to a fundamental weakness of character. Vacillation proved to be the king’s undoing. For further comment, see on ch. 37:2.

11. *Treasury.* Or, “storehouse.”

Clouts. An Old English word meaning cloth patches, or rags. The thoughtfulness of Ebed-melech shines forth as a gem in this narrative. Ropes alone would have been sufficient to save Jeremiah. But Ebed-melech provided rags, so that the ropes would not cut into the flesh of the elderly prophet.

Cords. That is, ropes.

12. *Under thine armholes.* See on v. 11.

13. *Remained in the court.* Again the vacillating character of Zedekiah stands revealed. He permitted Jeremiah to be taken out of the miry pit, but he did not dare release the prophet completely.

14. *Into the third entry.* Or, “at the third entrance.” It is impossible to identify the place of this secret meeting.

I will ask thee a thing. It is plain that the king had a reluctant respect for the prophet’s counsel, and could not altogether tear himself away from listening to it (see ch. 37:17).

15. *Put me to death.* Jeremiah evidently found it difficult to keep from believing that the king had supported the severe treatment that the princes of Judah had meted out to him.

Wilt thou not hearken? Or, “thou wilt not hearken.” The LXX reads, “Thou wilt *not* hearken to me,” with the strongest possible of Greek negatives (see on Matt. 5:18).

16. *That made us this soul.* Or, “who made our souls” (RSV). Zedekiah used this strong oath to remove from the prophet any lingering doubt as to the sincerity of his purpose.

17. *The God of hosts.* See on ch. 7:3.

Princes. Those commanding the army that surrounded Jerusalem. Nebuchadnezzar was at Riblah, on the Orontes River in Coele-Syria (see ch. 39:5).

19. Fallen to the Chaldeans. It seems that a number of Jews had given themselves up to the Chaldeans, either in response to the messages of Jeremiah or merely because their fear prompted this action to preserve their lives.

22. Women that are left. The wives and concubines of former kings who, with Zedekiah's own wives and concubines, would be taken by "Babylon's princes."

Thy friends. Literally, "the men of thy peace," that is, those who deceptively assured the king that all would turn out well. The words of the women were made more significant by their seeming reference to the "mire" in which Jeremiah had been placed (v. 6).

24. Let no man know. The hopelessly weak and vacillating king was more afraid of the princes than he was of the God of heaven and His prophet.

26. To Jonathan's house. See on ch. 37:15, 16. The weak king was afraid to have anyone know that he had had an interview with the prophet so he provided a cover-up for this interview.

27. He told them. Jeremiah acceded to the king's request (see on v. 26), and told the princes what the king "had commanded" him. Jeremiah was no more wrong when he withheld from the princes some information that did not rightly belong to them, than was the prophet Samuel, who took a similar course of action under the direct command of God (see on 1 Sam. 16:2).

Not perceived. Evidently the conversation between the king and the prophet had not been overheard, and the matter was dropped.

28. Court of the prison. See on v. 13.

When Jerusalem was taken. Evidently not very long after Jeremiah's final interview with Zedekiah (vs. 14–26).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1–28PK 455–458; 4T 182–184

1–54T 182

2–4PK 455

6 AA 575; PK 456; 4T 182, 525

7–144T 182

15–18PK 456

15–204T 183

19, 20 PK 457

24, 25 PK 458; 4T 184

CHAPTER 39

Jerusalem is taken. 4 Zedekiah is made blind, and sent to Babylon. 8 The city ruined, 9 the people captivated. 11 Nebuchadnezzar's charge for the good usage of Jeremiah. 15 God's promise to Ebed-melech.

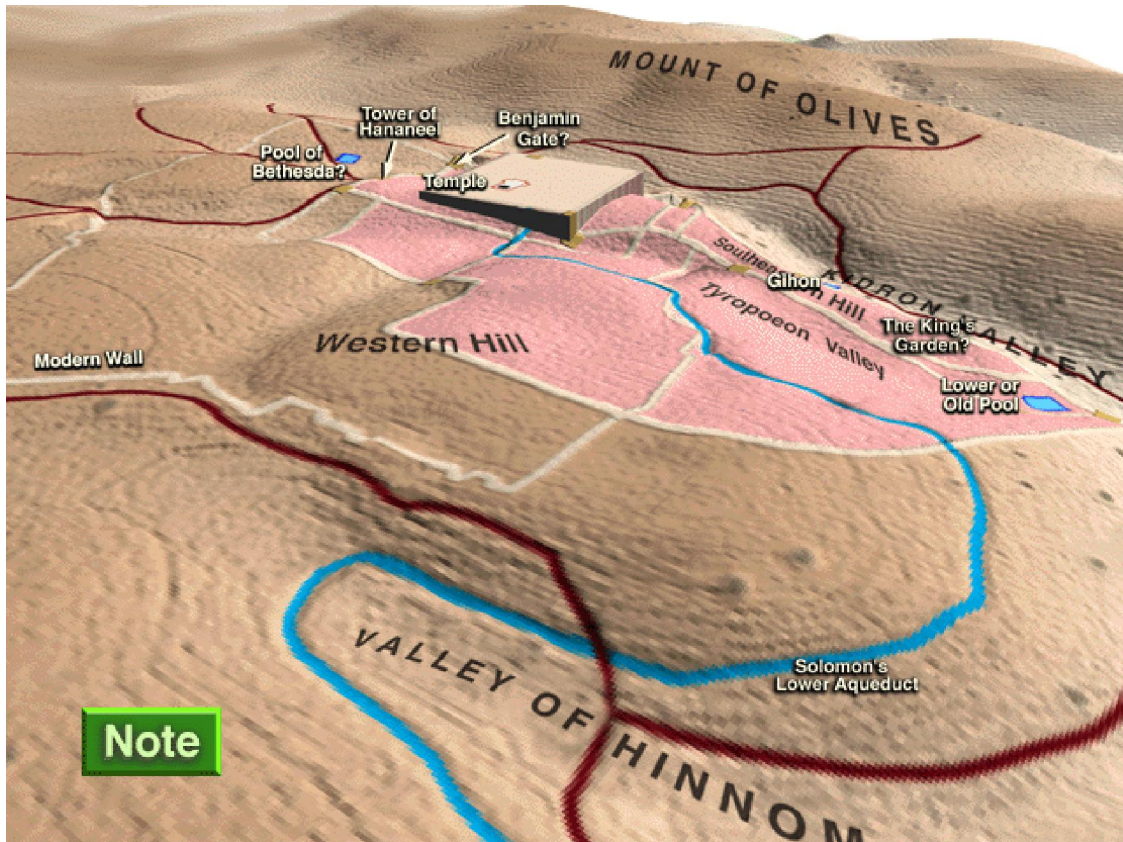
1. In the ninth year. The final siege against Jerusalem began approximately Jan. 15, 588 B.C. (see on 2 Kings 25:1 for the basis of this date).

2. The city was broken up. After besieging Jerusalem for 30 months, the Babylonians broke through its defenses on "the ninth day" of "the fourth month." This date can be approximated on the same basis as that in v. 1, as July 18, 586 B.C. For a more detailed account of the siege and capture of Jerusalem see Jer. 52; 2 Kings 25.

3. *And all the princes.* Instead of there being six princes, as implied here, there were probably only three, or even two, if the name Nergalsharezer, mentioned twice, represented only one individual.

Jerusalem and Environs in the Time of Jeremiah

8



Many archaeologists believe the city walls of Jerusalem included only the eastern hills in Jeremiah's day, but recent discoveries suggest an expansion into the Western Hill as indicated. Colored regions and lines (representing walls) show possible extent and are suggestive only.

Nergalsharezer, the Babylonian form of which is *Nergal-sharri-ušur*, meaning, "Nergal protect the king," is mentioned in a court almanac of Nebuchadnezzar as "Prince of *Sin-magir*." Sin-magir was a city and province of Babylonia, lying north of Babylon. This name appears in a shorter form in the passage under discussion here, although the

⁸Nichol, F. D. (1978). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary : The Holy Bible with exegetical and expository comment*. Commentary Reference Series (Je 37:4). Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association.

⁹Nichol, F. D. (1978). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary : The Holy Bible with exegetical and expository comment*. Commentary Reference Series (Ge 1:1). Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association.

Masoretes, who added the vowels to the consonantal text (see Vol. I, pp. 25, 26), did not understand it. They mistakenly made Nergalsharezer's title part of the next word "Nebo," thus creating the proper name Samgar-nebo. Actually the text should read "All the princes of the king of Babylon came and sat in the middle gate: Nergalsharezer of Sin-magir, Nebo-sarsechim, the rab-saris, Nergalsharezer, the rab-mag with all the rest of the officers of the king."

Whether the title rab-mag is a variant of Sin-magir or a separate Babylonian title is not known. Hence, it is uncertain whether two individuals by the name of Nergalsharezer were in Jerusalem or only one. Nergalsharezer is otherwise known as Nebuchadnezzar's son-in-law, Nergal-shar-usur, or Neriglissar, second successor on the throne, being king of Babylon from 560 to 556 B.C. (see Vol. III, pp. 46, 47).

Nebo-sarsechim is an unknown name. On the title rab-saris see on Dan. 1:3.

4. Then they fled. See ch. 52:7. The "king's garden" was probably near "the pool of Siloah" (see on Neh. 3:15), and from this the king went through the gate between the two walls. It is generally believed, on archeological evidence, that this gate was somewhere near the southeastern corner of the city wall. They fled eastward toward the plain, or Arabah, the distinctive name of the Jordan valley (see on 2 Sam. 2:29).

5. Overtook Zedekiah. It was apparently the king's intention to cross the Jordan River near Jericho, and find safety in the open country of Gilead or with a would-be ally such as Moab or Ammon (see ch. 27:3).

Riblah. This city to the north, "in the land of Hamath," was a traffic center on the Orontes River, and so provided a natural headquarters for Nebuchadnezzar in his invasion of Palestine.

6. Slew the sons. The severe punishment dealt out by the Chaldean conqueror (vs. 6, 7) was due to the fact that he placed Zedekiah on the throne as his supposedly loyal vassal, and yet the king of Judah treacherously rebelled against him (2 Kings 24:17–20), and violated the most solemn oaths taken in the name of Jehovah (see PK 447).

7. He put out Zedekiah's eyes. Thus two apparently mutually exclusive prophecies were fulfilled: (1) that Zedekiah would see Nebuchadnezzar and be taken to Babylon (ch. 32:4, 5), and (2) that he would die in Babylon but not see it (Eze. 12:13).

8. Burned the king's house. For a more detailed account of this devastation see Jer. 52:12–14; cf. 2 Kings 25:8–10.

9. Carried away captive. To prevent rebellion Nebuchadnezzar followed the same deportation policy as did the Assyrians before him (2 Kings 15:29; 17:6).

10. Left of the poor. This was undoubtedly done to prevent a political vacuum in the land. The gifts of land to the poor would ensure their allegiance to the Babylonians, and perhaps also, through the cultivation of the land, the Babylonians might even expect some tribute.

11. Gave charge concerning Jeremiah. It is plain that Nebuchadnezzar learned of Jeremiah's unwavering counsel of submission to Babylon either through deserters or spies, or from Zedekiah himself, and so as soon as he found out that Jeremiah had been "bound in chains among all that were carried away captive" (ch. 40:1), he ordered the prophet released.

13. Nebuzar-adan ... sent. Presumably from Ramah (see on v. 14; ch. 40:1).

Nebuzar-adan is known from Babylonian records. His Babylonian name, *Nabu-zer-iddinam*, means "Nabu gives offspring." His Hebrew title, *Rab-tabbachim*, correctly

translated “captain of the guard,” literally means “chief of the butchers.” However, the term was used in a wider sense to designate the chief of the bodyguard of the king. In the Babylonian records Nebuzar-adan is listed several decades later with the title “chief cook,” which, idiomatically, had the wider meaning of “chancellor.”

Nebushasban, Rab-saris. Rather, “Nebushazban the rabsaris” (see on v. 3). His Babylonian name, *Nabu-shezibanni* means, “Nabu, save me.” On Nergalsharezer see on v. 3.

14. Court of the prison. See ch. 38:28. This statement may be harmonized with ch. 40:1 by assuming that Jeremiah was taken out of the prison and was carried along as a captive with the other captives for the few miles from Jerusalem to Ramah (see on ch. 31:15), at which place the Babylonian captain gave him the good news of his release. The account of ch. 39:14 merely omits the intervening events between Jeremiah’s release from prison and his joining Gedaliah, which events are related in detail in ch. 40:1–6.

Committed him. At his own choice (see ch. 40:5).

Gedaliah. See on ch. 26:24. True to his family’s attitude, “the son of Ahikam” now advances as Jeremiah’s friend and protector.

15. While he was shut up. Verses 15–18 are a parenthetical account of God’s promise to Ebed-melech because of his kindness to Jeremiah.

16. Ebed-melech. See on ch. 38:7.

17. I will deliver thee. Because of his loyalty toward Jeremiah, God promises the Ethiopian that his life will be spared from “the hand of” the princes of Judah, who were angered by his action regarding the prophet (ch. 38:7–13), and that he will “not fall by the sword” (ch. 39:18) of the Babylonians, since Jeremiah will undoubtedly intercede for him.

18. For a prey. An idiom meaning that his life would be spared. At a time when countless thousands lost their lives a man could ask no greater reward than this.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1–74T 184

1, 2 PK 458

6, 7 PK 459

11–14PK 460

CHAPTER 40

1 *Jeremiah, being set free by Nebuzar-adan, goeth to Gedaliah.* 7 *The dispersed Jews repair unto him.* 13 *Johanan revealing Ishmael’s conspiracy is not believed.*

1. Ramah. Most probably what is now Ramallah, not Ramah of Benjamin (see on ch. 31:15). This town was evidently used by the Babylonians as a station for prisoners brought there from Jerusalem subject to further orders as to their final disposition. Nebuzar-adan apparently had not met Jeremiah before, and used this opportunity to surprise the prophet with the good news that he was to be released immediately (see on ch. 39:14).

2. The Lord thy God. Word having come to him that Jeremiah was the Jewish prophet who had advocated submission to Babylon, the captain of the guard graciously recognizes the God of Israel and His mission through Jeremiah, and respectfully leaves it to the prophet to go where he will (vs. 4, 5).

4. From the chains. It is evident from the detailed account that Jeremiah was given his actual physical freedom here at Ramah (see on ch. 39:14).

5. *Hath made governor.* Like Jeremiah, Gedaliah was doubtless one of the leaders who had supported the policy of submission to the Chaldeans (see on chs. 26:24; 36:10). During excavations at Lachish a seal impression was discovered bearing the inscription “Belonging to Gedaliahu, who is over the house.”

Victuals and a reward. The RSV reads “an allowance of food and a present.” Because of the privation Jeremiah had suffered on account of the siege, these “victuals” were a great blessing. The “reward” was probably a gift of money to compensate for the opposition and consequent discomforts suffered by the prophet because he advocated submission to Babylon.

6. *Mizpah.* Mizpah was evidently chosen to be the new center of government. This city, whose name means “watchtower” (see on Gen. 31:49), was probably in the territory of Benjamin (see on Joshua 18:26; 2 Kings 25:23). It was there that Samuel “judged Israel” (1 Sam. 7:15, 16) and Saul was chosen king (1 Sam. 10:17–25). Mizpah has been identified with *Tell en-Naşbeh*, which was excavated by an expedition led by Prof. W. F. Badè.

7. *The captains.* The leaders of isolated units of the Jewish army that were “in the fields,” who now realized that further opposition to the Babylonians was futile. Therefore nothing remained for them but to seek protection from Gedaliah.

8. *Netophathite.* Netophah was 25/8 mi. (4.2 km.) southeast of Bethlehem.

Jezaniah. Probably a naturalized foreigner from the small kingdom of Maachah east of the Jordan (see on 2 Sam. 10:6).

10. *Gather ye wine.* This places this incident in the fall of the year. Since the owners of the fields, vineyards, and olive orchards had been taken captive to Babylon, Gedaliah offered the “captains” these products to meet their immediate needs and to provide food for the approaching winter season.

11. *When all the Jews.* Those who fled to nearby countries to escape capture by the Chaldeans.

12. *Very much.* The fields, though unattended for the summer, evidently produced by themselves a great abundance for the pitiful remnant left in Judah.

14. *Dost thou certainly know?* The king of the Ammonites had been in league with Zedekiah against the Babylonians (ch. 27:3). If he dared not resist Nebuchadnezzar openly, he still hoped through the instrumentality of Ishmael to accomplish his purpose. Johanan learned of the plot, and in fidelity to his new protector warned Gedaliah; but in vain, for the latter, in guileless trustfulness, refused to believe in Ishmael’s guilt (see v. 16).

16. *Thou speakest falsely.* Perhaps Gedaliah did not trust Johanan, of late a “captain” in Zedekiah’s army. In any event the upright Gedaliah would not stoop to follow Johanan’s advice of preventive murder, even though Ishmael was threatening his very life.

CHAPTER 41

1 *Ishmael, treacherously killing Gedaliah and others, purposeth with the residue to flee unto the Ammonites.* 11 *Johanan recovereth the captives, and mindeth to flee into Egypt.*

1. *It came to pass.* There is no direct statement as to when the events of ch. 41 took place, but in view of the continuous nature of the narrative, it seems reasonable to conclude that they followed immediately the events of ch. 40.

In the seventh month. Approximately two or three months after Jerusalem was taken by the Babylonians (ch. 39:1, 2), if the narrative proceeds uninterrupted, as it apparently does (see PK 460).

Did eat bread together. Ishmael and his ten fellow conspirators paid a visit to Gedaliah, ostensibly on a mission of courteous recognition of Gedaliah's high office, but in reality intent on murdering Gedaliah and all his adherents.

3. Men of war. In apposition with "the Chaldeans." The RSV translates this clause, "and the Chaldean soldiers who happened to be there."

4. No man knew it. So efficiently was the massacre carried out that not one escaped to report it.

5. Certain from Shechem. These 80 men seem to have been on a pilgrimage of mourning to the Temple ruins, perhaps also to observe the Feast of Tabernacles and to present grain offerings and incense at the site of the ancient altar.

Their beards shaven. A custom forbidden by the Mosaic law (see Lev. 19:27, 28; Deut. 14:1, 2).

6. Weeping all along. Treacherously Ishmael meets them as one sharing their grief. The LXX, however, represents the pilgrims as weeping, not Ishmael.

7. Slew them. The purpose of this atrocious act is not clear. Any one of the following may have been the cause: (1) an ungovernable bitterness of spirit aroused by the presence of these mourners; (2) a suspicion that the willingness of the pilgrims to recognize Gedaliah as the leader appointed by the Babylonians, indicated a traitorous act against Judah; (3) Ishmael's vindictive retaliation for the slaying of the "princes of Judah" (see ch. 52:10); (4) plunder of the pilgrims' goods.

9. Because of Gedaliah. Ishmael had slain these men by the deception of using Gedaliah's name (v. 6).

For fear of Baasha. See 1 Kings 15:16–22; 2 Chron. 16:1–6.

10. The king's daughters. Zedekiah's sons had been killed at Riblah (ch. 39:6). The daughters had been spared and given over to Gedaliah for his protection. In taking them into his custody and protection, Ishmael was claiming to be the ruling representative of the royal house, according to Eastern custom.

Ammonites. Since they had been allied with Zedekiah (see on chs. 27:3; 39:5), Ishmael felt he could find safety there. Indeed, ch. 40:14 indicates that their king had "sent Ishmael" to murder Gedaliah.

11. Johanan. See ch. 40:8, 13, 15.

12. Great waters. The avenging of these dastardly crimes took place at the large pool in Gibeon, now *ej-Jīb*, 5 3/4 mi. (9.2 km.) northwest of Jerusalem. Johanan had previously warned of the danger to Gedaliah's life (ch. 40:13, 14).

13. They were glad. An indication that Gedaliah had been popular, and that those who had been under his rule rejoiced that the murder was avenged.

15. With eight men. Evidently two of Ishmael's "ten men" (v. 1) had been killed in one of the previous encounters (vs. 2, 3, 11, 12).

Ammonites. See on v. 10.

17. Habitation. Heb. *geruth*, "a lodging place," that is, an inn for travelers.

Chimham. Barzillai the Gileadite had shown kindness to David (2 Sam. 19:31–39), and because of this, David instructed Solomon to treat his son Chimham with every courtesy and care (see on 1 Kings 2:7). Probably Chimham was given this land near

Bethlehem by the Hebrew king as his own, and this accounts for the name of the caravansary.

CHAPTER 42

¹ *Johanan desireth Jeremiah to enquire of God, promising obedience to his will. 7 Jeremiah assureth him of safety in Judea, 13 and destruction in Egypt. 19 He reproveth their hypocrisy, in requiring of the Lord that which they meant not.*

1. Jezaniah. See ch. 40:8. Instead of Jezaniah the LXX here gives the name of Azariah (see ch. 43:2).

2. Pray for us. Inasmuch as Jeremiah had gone to Mizpah (ch. 40:6), he was undoubtedly among those being carried off by Ishmael who were rescued by Johanan at Gibeon (ch. 41:10, 13, 14). Looking to him now as their true prophet, whose patriotism could be trusted, all the people besought him to ask God on their behalf for wisdom and guidance.

5. Then they said. Now thoroughly humbled because of the sufferings brought upon them by the Babylonian invasion, the people earnestly declared their complete submission to whatever God might have in mind for them. They pledged their full obedience to “the voice of the Lord” (v. 6). See on v. 20.

7. After ten days. This time lapse should have been an evidence to the people that Jeremiah was not giving his own answer but one that came through him from God after much prayer and meditation (see on Jer. 24:4; cf. Eze. 3:15, 16).

10. Build you. A reaffirmation of God’s intention toward His people (see chs. 1:10; 18:7–10; 24:4–6; see on ch. 32:41).

For I repent me. See on Num. 23:19. This does not mean sorrow for what was done in the past, as is true of men for their transgressions, but a change in God’s purpose from judgment to mercy because of the change of men’s attitude and action (see Jer. 18:8; 26:3; see on Joel 2:13).

12. To return to your own land. This may be understood as signifying either that they would be taken to Babylon as others had been and later returned to their homeland; or that they, as the “remnant” of the Jews permitted by the Chaldeans to remain now in the land (2 Kings 25:10–12, 22), would surely return to their own fields and vineyards. It seems evident that Jeremiah intended to convey the latter meaning.

14. Into the land of Egypt. The land of the Nile seemed to offer a safe and peaceful place in which to dwell. It was the granary of the East, and its abundant harvests would provide a pleasing and much-to-be-desired contrast with the famine conditions the “remnant” (v. 2) had experienced because of the Babylonian invasion.

The very answer of the prophet to the people gave evidence that it was inspired by God. The secret intents, wishes, or hopes of the people to go to Egypt (see vs. 14–20), in spite of their professed willingness to follow the counsel of the Lord, whatever it might be (see on v. 5), were now unveiled by God in this message given through Jeremiah. God in His mercy did not leave the people unwarned as to the consequences of rejecting His message (vs. 16–18).

16. Then it shall come to pass. Once again Jeremiah warns against looking to Egypt for help instead of submitting to the Babylonians (see chs. 2:36; 37:7–10).

20. Dissembled in your hearts. The earnestness of the people’s declared intention to follow the will of God was only a pretense. Like Balaam of old (see on Num. 22:20), the people were hoping that the Lord would endorse a course of action they were desirous of

pursuing. We must ever guard against making the same mistake in our great life decisions.

CHAPTER 43

¹ *Johanan, discrediting Jeremiah's prophecy, carrieth Jeremiah and others into Egypt. 8 Jeremiah prophesieth by a type the conquest of Egypt by the Babylonians.*

1. All the words. See ch. 42:10–22.

2. Azariah. The fact that Azariah is named before the acknowledged group leader Johanan (chs. 41:13, 16; 42:1, 8) would seem to indicate that Azariah was the real leader of the prevailing discontent. This charge that Jeremiah spoke falsely, and for the purpose of delivering the people “into the hand of the Chaldeans” (ch. 43:3), repeated the former accusation against him (see ch. 37:13, 14).

Proud. Literally, “insolent,” or “presumptuous.” This adjective suggests that these “men” by no means represented all the people; but, as so often happens, their vocal aggressiveness enabled them to seize the initiative.

3. Baruch. The people charged that Baruch, as the prophet's secretary and companion (see p. 343), had influenced Jeremiah to “deliver” these remaining Jews “into the hand of the Chaldeans.”

4. Johanan. Evidently he resumed acting as leader of the remnant in Judah.

5. Took all the remnant. This included Jeremiah and Baruch. (v. 6).

Returned from all nations. A reference to the fugitives from Moab, Ammon, or Edom (ch. 40:11), whose inclusion in this emigration meant that practically the whole of Judea would be left unpopulated.

6. King's daughters. This included all the royal princesses (see on ch. 41:10).

Left with Gedaliah. See Jer. 39:9–14; cf. 2 Kings 25:8–12, 22.

7. Tahpanhes. See on Jer. 2:16; cf. 1 Kings 11:19. This town was the place where the emigrants decided to establish their new home, at least for a time.

9. In the clay in the brickkiln. For other predictive symbolic actions see Jer. 19:10; 27:2; Eze. 12:1–7.

10. Nebuchadnezzar. Regarding this spelling see on Dan. 1:1.

Spread his royal pavilion. Some understand this to be a reference to the royal canopy spread over the temporary throne. Others understand this “pavilion” to be the leather covering placed over the platform under the throne, upon which criminals knelt to receive the death stroke. The latter is favored by the LXX rendering: “and he shall lift up weapons against them.” This view agrees with the prophetic forecast that when Nebuchadnezzar came to Egypt he would be God's avenger to execute His wrath against His rebellious people.

11. When he cometh. For the historical background of this invasion see on ch. 46:13.

12. Array himself. Nebuchadnezzar will possess himself “with the land of Egypt” as easily as a shepherd puts on his garment. The LXX for this clause reads, “and he shall search for vermin in the land of Egypt, as a shepherd searches his garment for vermin.”

13. Images. That is, the pillars, or obelisks, of the place.

Beth-shemesh. Literally, “the house of the sun.” It was probably Heliopolis, or On. The LXX for this clause reads, “and he shall break to pieces the pillars of Heliopolis that are in On.” Heliopolis is a Greek name meaning “city of the sun.” The city was located

near the site of modern Cairo. Its Egyptian name was *Iunu*, of which the Hebrew form is 'On (Gen. 41:45, 50; etc.).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

5-7PK 460

CHAPTER 44

1 *Jeremiah expresseth the desolation of Judah for their idolatry.* 11 *He prophesieth their destruction, who commit idolatry in Egypt.* 15 *The obstinacy of the Jews.* 20 *Jeremiah threateneth them for the same,* 29 *and for a sign prophesieth the destruction of Egypt.*

1. In the land of Egypt. This message from God probably came a few years after the events of ch. 43 took place (see on ch. 44:15). The three cities named were undoubtedly places where the emigrants from Judea settled.

Migdol. Perhaps *Tell el-Heir*, a town about 61/4 mi. (10 km.) south of Pelusium.

Tahpanhes, ... Noph. See on ch. 2:16.

Pathros. A region or country, not a city. It was a general name for southern, or Upper, Egypt (see Vol. III, p. 81).

2. Ye have seen all the evil. Beginning with an appeal to their own personal experience, God hoped to convince the Jews that their troubles and distresses had been caused by their apostasy from the worship of the true God (see v. 3).

4. Rising early. See on ch. 7:13.

5. Their ear. See Isa. 55:3; Jer. 7:24; 25:4.

8. Burning incense. These words imply that besides continuing in the familiar idolatrous practices of their own land, they engaged in those of the Egyptians. It was the danger of this idolatrous connection with Egypt that made Jeremiah opposed to every plan of alliance with that country.

9. Wickedness of their wives. That these royal princesses did much to encourage apostasy is amply shown from the history of God's people. Solomon introduced idolatry largely through the influence of his heathen wives (1 Kings 11:4-8). This same wicked influence was exerted by the queen mother of Asa (1 Kings 15:9-13) and the queen mother of Ahaziah (2 Chron. 22:1-4). Many royal women of Judah were of foreign birth, and therefore became the chief promoters of an alien idol worship, the wives of the nobles and other citizens following their iniquitous example.

10. Before your fathers. See Rom. 9:4, 5.

11. Set my face. See on Eze. 6:2.

12. Set their faces. Notice the play on this expression. God had set His face against His people (v. 11) because they had set their faces to go contrary to His counsel.

14. A desire to return. An indication that the exiles still clung to the hope of returning to their homeland. The assurance that there would be "such as shall escape" is repeated more fully in v. 28.

15. Which knew. Evidently the husbands had consented, sooner or later, to their wives' idolatrous practices (see on v. 19).

17. The queen of heaven. This goddess is usually identified with the Assyro-Babylonian Ishtar. Inasmuch as there were immoral ceremonies connected with this worship, it aroused Jeremiah's hot indignation, particularly since it appears to have been a prominent part of the idolatry then practiced. The Assyro-Babylonian Ishtar, the mother goddess, was the equivalent of the divinity known to the Hebrews as Ashtoreth and to the

Canaanites as Astarte, whose figurines are found in Palestine (see Vol. II, pp. 39, 319.) This goddess of fertility, of maternity, of sexual love, and of war was worshiped in rites of a grossly immoral and debasing character. She was essentially the same goddess though worshipped under many names and in many aspects, such as the earth-mother, the virgin-mother, and is identified in a general sense with Atargatis, the “Great Mother” of Asia Minor, Artemis (Diana) of Ephesus, Venus, and others. Various names applied to the virgin-mother goddess contain an element meaning “lady,” or “mistress,” as Nana, Innini, Irnini, Beltis. Some of the designations were Belti, “my lady” (the exact equivalent of the Italian *Madonna*), Belit-ni, “our lady,” and “queen of heaven,” the name under which Ishtar was worshiped on the housetops as morning or evening star, with an offering of baked cakes, wine, and incense. Ishtar was also known as the merciful mother who intercedes with the gods for her worshipers. Some of these names and attributes are today applied to the virgin Mary, and many of the localized virgin cults in the Old World are believed to be the modern survivals of the worship of some of these various aspects of the ancient mother goddess.

Judah, ... Jerusalem. They had engaged in idolatry long before the Captivity, and reforms like those of Hezekiah and Josiah had not been permanent.

19. Cakes. See on ch. 7:18.

Without our men. Or, “without our husbands.” Resenting Jeremiah’s words condemning their iniquity, the women quickly reacted by declaring in self-defense that their husbands sanctioned their actions.

22. Without an inhabitant. This should not be taken in an absolute sense, but simply as a graphic picture of the extreme desolation of Judah (see on ch. 4:25).

23. Therefore this evil. The prophet decisively disposes of the apostates’ defense by showing that their seeming vaunted prosperity tragically ended in making their “land a desolation, and an astonishment, and a curse, without an inhabitant, as at this day” (v. 22).

25. Accomplish your vows. Ironically Jeremiah assures them that their vows of rebellious disobedience to the will of God are to be nullified by the divine vow that they shall experience misery and death in Egypt (see v. 13).

26. My great name. That is, the Lord (see Gen. 22:16; Ex. 3:15; see on Jer. 7:3). God’s name would “no more be named” by these apostates “in all the land of Egypt,” because they disrespected and profaned it, and also because there would “be an end of them” (Jer. 44:27).

30. Pharaoh-hophra. This Egyptian king, known to the Greeks as Apries, reigned about 20 years (589–570 B.C.). Because of an army revolt he had to yield the throne to the army commander Ahmose, better known by the Greek name Amosis (see Vol. II, p. 91). Tradition has it that because Jeremiah condemned their course of action the Jews in Egypt stoned the prophet to death, although according to other traditions he survived until Nebuchadrezzar’s invasion of Egypt and was carried either to Babylon or back to Judah, where he died a natural death.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

28 PK 461

CHAPTER 45

1 *Baruch being dismayed, 4 Jeremiah instructeth and comforteth him.*

1. Baruch. An insight into the character of Jeremiah's faithful scribe is given in this chapter (see p. 343).

Fourth year of Jehoiakim. According to this date, ch. 45 follows ch. 36 (see ch. 36:4; see on ch. 36:1).

3. Woe is me now! With Jeremiah in prison, and the king and his counselors giving no heed to the prophet's messages, Baruch became despondent. His ambition to hold a position of importance in a revived Jewish state (v. 5) seemed dashed in view of the apparent failure of Jeremiah's endeavors. The prophet could enter into a sympathetic understanding of his secretary's feelings and so help him, for he, too, had experienced bitter disappointments (chs. 15:10–21; 20:7–18). Baruch, like all men, needed to learn to expect the bitter along with the sweet, failure as well as prosperity (see Job 2:10).

5. Seek them not. No earthly success could be as important to Baruch as the work God desired him to do. Each one has a place in God's great plan which only he can fill.

Thy life will I give. God comforts Baruch, the scribe, with the promise that He will be merciful to him. In marked contrast with the divine vengeance and retribution that would descend upon the "whole land" of Judea (v. 4) and the evil that would come "upon all flesh" by reason of the Babylonian invasion (2 Kings 25), Baruch's life would be protected by God. Most of those whose success and position Baruch envied would have no such assurance, but would perish miserably in the destruction of Jerusalem.

For a prey. See on ch. 39:18.

In all places. These words seemingly indicate that Baruch's future would be one of wandering and exile. We do know that he went down to Egypt (see ch. 43:5–7). Tradition has it that he died either in Egypt or in Babylon.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

5 MH 476

CHAPTER 46

1 *Jeremiah prophesieth the overthrow of Pharaoh's army at Euphrate, 13 and the conquest of Egypt by Nebuchadrezzar. 27 He comforteth Jacob in their chatisement.*

1. Word of the Lord. Heb. *debar*–*Yahweh*, a technical expression occurring more than 50 times in the book of Jeremiah. *Dabar*, "word," frequently has the stronger sense of "commandment" (see Deut. 4:13, where "ten commandments" is literally "the ten words"). *Dabar* may also mean "matter," "business," "affair" (see Ex 24:14; Joshua 2:14; 1 Chron. 26:32). Thus "the word of the Lord" is here Yahweh's authoritative statement concerning His business with the nations.

Against the Gentiles. This verse introduces a new section of the book of Jeremiah. Chapters 46–51 contain a series of ten poetic declarations about various nations and tribes: Egypt (ch. 46), the Philistines (ch. 47), Moab (ch. 48), the Ammonites (ch. 49:1–6), Edom (ch. 49:7–22), Damascus (ch. 49:23–27), Kedar (ch. 49:28, 29), Habor (ch. 49:30–33), Elam (ch. 49:34–39), and Babylon (chs. 50:1–51:58). The Heb. *'al*, here translated "against," is probably better understood as "concerning," for although these prophecies portray many divine judgments, they also promise restoration (see chs. 48:47; 49:6, 39).

2. Pharaoh-necho. On the meaning of the term "Pharaoh" see on Gen. 12:15. Necho II (610–595 B.C.) came to the throne of Egypt at a time when the nation was undergoing a

political, cultural, and economic rebirth. His father, Psamtik I (663–610 B.C.), had enjoyed the political and military backing of Assyria against the Ethiopians, who had dominated Egypt for about a century. With the disintegration of the Assyrian Empire he had asserted his independence from Assyria and had established the Twenty-sixth, or Saïte, Dynasty. Trade with Greece and Phoenicia flourished and economic prosperity grew. Newly gained independence and prosperity revived a sense of national pride and power.

When Nineveh fell in 612 B.C. the Assyrian Empire, which had dominated Near Eastern affairs for more than two and a half centuries, came to an end, leaving a political vacuum. The Egyptians saw an opportunity in this situation to re-establish an empire in Western Asia. Shortly after Necho II succeeded his father in 610 B.C., an Egyptian army was dispatched to aid the Assyrians, whom the Babylonians had ejected from an emergency capital set up at Haran. The campaign did not succeed in recapturing Haran. It was apparently at this time (609) that Necho, on his way through Palestine toward Haran, defeated the troops of Judah and killed King Josiah in the battle of Megiddo (2 Kings 23:29, 30; 2 Chron. 35:20–27), and then went north against the Babylonians in Syria to strengthen his headquarters at Carchemish on the Euphrates (2 Chron. 35:20). Three months later he returned, and at Riblah (2 Kings 23:31, 33) put Jehoahaz, the new king of Judah, in bonds and placed on the throne Jehoiakim (2 Kings 23:34), who was evidently less nationalistic and more inclined to follow foreign leadership. (Dating these events in 609 B.C.—not, as formerly, in 608—shifts other reigns: Manasseh through the accession of Jehoiakim, also several contemporary pharaohs.)

Four years later Necho's armies were expelled from Carchemish.

Carchemish. A town on the western bank of the Euphrates, commanding one of the river's most important fords. It was the natural crossing point into Mesopotamia for armies invading from the West, and was thus a place of great strategic and commercial importance.

Nebuchadnezzar. See also the comment on Dan. 1:1. It was Nebuchadnezzar's father, Nabopolassar (626–605 B.C.), who, with the Medes and Scythians, accomplished the destruction of the Assyrian Empire. Holding the eastern half of the Fertile Crescent, he would naturally desire to rule the Westland also. He thus became the chief opponent of Necho, who was trying to reestablish control over Palestine and Syria.

Until 1956 there were no known contemporary records of Nabopolassar's later years. But a newly found chronicle (see p. 756) tells how the crown prince, Nebuchadnezzar, won the decisive battle with Egypt in 605, and was immediately recalled by his father's death. This new chronicle gives us the Babylonian version of the events back of several Biblical narratives: the death of Josiah, the battle of Carchemish, the invasions in which Daniel, Jehoiachin, and Ezekiel were taken captive. The capture of Jehoiachin (unnamed) is mentioned, and dated Adar 2 (approximately March 16, 597 B.C.).

Fourth year of Jehoiakim. According to ch. 25:1, the fourth year of Jehoiakim was the first year of Nebuchadnezzar, 604 B.C. Therefore many have accepted 604 as the date of the battle of Carchemish.

The difficulty, however, with this view is that the chronicle (like Berosus; see on Dan. 1:1) places this battle *before* the accession of Nebuchadnezzar, whereas this verse is generally taken to mean that the accession of Nebuchadnezzar, whereas Jeremiah states that the battle of Carchemish was fought in the fourth year of Jehoiakim, the first year of

Nebuchadnezzar, at least some months *after* he had come to the throne. Josephus (*Antiquities* x. 6. 1) thus interprets Jeremiah as dating the battle after Nebuchadnezzar's accession.

Formerly, before the chronicle was known, when historical sources for the years 609–604 B.C. were lacking for events in Palestine and Syria, it was thought that soon after the battle of Megiddo (now dated in 609 B.C.) the Babylonians had taken over Palestine and Syria, and that Berosus spoke of a rebellion against them.

Some have solved the problem by equating the 4th year of Jehoiakim with the accession year (before the 1st) of Nebuchadnezzar.

But another explanation has been offered. The phrase “in the fourth year of Jehoiakim” can just as logically be taken as the date, not of the battle, but of the message (v. 1) that came to the prophet “against Egypt, against the army of Pharaoh-necho king of Egypt ... in the fourth year.” In that case, the two intervening relative clauses introduced by “which” can be taken as parenthetical, an allusion to the well-known battle of the preceding year. The Hebrew without the punctuation will allow this interpretation, which leaves the battle undated in Jeremiah's account, and thus eliminates the difficulty.

3. Order ye. That is, “put ye in order,” “prepare.”

Buckler. Heb. *magen*, a small, possibly circular, shield used by light-armed troops.

Shield. Heb. *šinnah*, a long shield for the protection of the entire body, used by heavily armed troops.

4. Furbish. That is, “polish.”

Brigandines. Heb. *siryonoth*, “suits of armor.”

5. Wherefore? The prophet expresses surprise at the defeat of the Egyptians. He had probably witnessed personally the Egyptian retreat from Carchemish with the Babylonians close behind.

Saith the Lord. Heb. *ne'um–Yahweh*. This expression of divine affirmation appears more than 160 times in Jeremiah.

6. The north. See on ch. 1:14.

7. A flood. Heb. *ye'or*, from Egyptian *īteru*, “the river,” that is, the Nile (see Gen. 41:1, 2; Ex. 1:22; 2:3; 7:15, 17–21, 24, 25). Egypt, virtually a rainless country, was dependent upon the annual inundation of the Nile for irrigation. The time when the Nile reached its high point in September and October marked the chief event of the year, and from ancient times was carefully recorded. The prophet here uses the picture of the flooding Nile as a striking figure of the Egyptian armies over-running Palestine and Syria (see Jer. 46:8).

9. Ethiopians. Heb. *Kush* (see on Gen. 10:6).

Libyans. Heb. *Pût*. Inhabitants of Punt or of Libya on the north coast of Africa (see on Gen. 10:6).

Lydians. Heb. *Ludim*. It is not certain whether the Ludim mentioned here were Lydians from western Asia Minor or an African tribe neighboring Egypt. In favor of the former view is the LXX rendering, *Ludoι*, “Lydians,” and the fact that an inscription of Ashurbanipal, king of Assyria, states that Necho's father, Psamtik I, had troops in his army furnished by Gyges, king of Lydia. In favor of their being an African tribe is the

fact that the Ludim descended from Mizraim, the son of Ham, which would relate them to the Egyptians. This, of course, would not preclude their having migrated at an early date from Africa to Asia Minor (see on Gen. 10:13).

The Lydians are not to be confused with the descendants of Lud, the son of Shem, who seem to have been a north Mesopotamian people (Gen. 10:22; 1 Chron 1:17; see on Gen. 10:22).

10. Lord God of hosts. On the meaning of this expression see on ch. 7:3.

Sword shall devour. In the Hebrew, swords are represented as having mouths. Thus “the edge of the sword” is literally “the mouth of the sword” (Gen. 34:26); a “twoedged sword” is literally “a sword of mouths” (Prov. 5:4). The handles of swords were sometimes constructed in the shape of an animal’s head, with the blade protruding from the beast’s mouth.

Sacrifice. Heb. *zebach*, from *zabach*, “to sacrifice,” or “to slaughter.” Here the root meaning, “slaughter,” seems the more prominent idea.

North country. See on ch. 1:14.

11. Virgin. A favorite expression of Jeremiah in referring to the people of Israel (see Jer. 14:17; 18:13; 31:4, 21; Lam. 1:15; 2:13). Here it is applied to Egypt.

Shalt thou use. This may be translated in the present tense, “thou art taking” (see RSV), or in the past, “In vain you have used many medicines” (RSV). The Egyptians were pre-eminent among the peoples of the ancient Near East in medical practice. Two important Egyptian medical treatises have been found, the Edwin Smith Surgical Papyrus and the Ebers Medical Papyrus. They indicate that the practical aspects of Egyptian medicine were on a remarkably high level at an early date. Physicians showed skill in the treatment of fractures and understood the value of the pulse in determining the condition of a patient. They came near discovering the circulation of the blood. Herodotus (iii. 1, 129) states that the Persian emperors Cyrus and Darius employed Egyptian physicians. The Greeks drew so heavily for their medical science upon Egyptian knowledge that they identified their god of medicine, Asclepius (called by the Romans Aesculapius), with the Egyptian physician and sage of the Third Dynasty, Imhotep. The prophet’s thought seems to be that although Egypt might produce the world’s greatest physicians, there was to be no healing of her own wounds in the day of visitation.

13. The word. See on v. 1. This verse is written in prose. Verses 3–12, 14–24, and 27, 28 are in poetic form. Verse 13 introduces a new section of the prophetic message, a forecast of Nebuchadnezzar’s invasion of Egypt.

Should come. Because of lack of positive historical confirmation, many scholars have doubted that the predicted invasion of Egypt by the Babylonians described here and in Jer. 43:8–13; 44:30; Eze. 29:1–20 actually took place. Josephus states that “in the fifth year after the sacking of Jerusalem, which was the twenty-third year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, Nebuchadnezzar ... invaded Egypt in order to subdue it, and, having killed the king who was then reigning and appointed another, he again took captive the Jews who were in the country and carried them to Babylon” (*Antiquities* x. 9. 7). That this statement by Josephus cannot be entirely depended upon is evident from the fact that Apries was the king of Egypt from 589 to 570 B.C. and so was not killed by Nebuchadnezzar in the latter’s 23d year (582 B.C.). There is, moreover, no contemporary evidence that Egypt was invaded at that time. Some historians previously interpreted an inscription of one Nesuhor, governor of Elephantine under Apries, as indicating that

Nebuchadnezzar invaded Egypt and penetrated as far south as Assuan (also written Aswan). But subsequent study has shown that the inscription in question was misinterpreted and that it applies rather to a mutiny by Greek and Asiatic mercenaries in Upper Egypt.

There is, however, a fragmentary Babylonian tablet dated in the 37th year of Nebuchadnezzar (568 B.C.) that speaks of a conflict between Nebuchadnezzar and Amasis of Egypt. Although it is impossible to determine the details of this invasion, the fact that it came not long after Amasis overthrew his predecessor, Apries, would seem to indicate that Nebuchadnezzar saw in the civil war then raging in Egypt an opportunity to conquer that weakened country and add it to his empire. This event may also be the correct setting of Josephus' narrative (see previous paragraph). Ezekiel's prophecy (ch. 29:17–20) of a Babylonian conquest, given in the "seven and twentieth year" (571 or 570 B.C.), adds further probability to an invasion about this time. Secular history is silent as to the extent of the success of this Babylonian invasion. There may have been more than one campaign, but it is thought by some that this campaign is the one described here by Jeremiah.

Some have suggested that Jeremiah may have been an eyewitness of the events described in ch. 46:13–26. In such an event Jeremiah would have been an old man. This invasion of 568/67 B.C. came about 60 years after he had begun to prophesy in 628/27 or 627/26 B.C.

14. Migdol. See on ch. 44:1.

Noph. That is, Memphis (see on ch. 2:16).

Tahpanhes. See on ch. 2:16.

It is noteworthy that all the cities mentioned here are in Lower Egypt, which fact may indicate that the Babylonian invasion did not penetrate far up the Nile valley.

15. Swept away. A change in vowel pointing permits the translation "Chep has fled." This would agree with the LXX, which here reads, "Why has Apis fled?" Apis, Egyptian *Hep*, was from early historical times the bull-god of Memphis. Several inscriptions from the Twenty-sixth Dynasty, during which time Jeremiah was in Egypt, speaks of *Hep* as "installed in the house of Ptah," the chief god of Memphis. Apis was believed to be incarnate in a succession of sacred bulls, which were kept in great luxury at Memphis for worship and divination. When such bulls died they were mummified and buried with great care.

In 1850 the French archeologist Mariette discovered the Serapeum at Sakkara, an ancient cemetery of Memphis. This consists of two subterranean galleries about 1,200 ft. (366 m.) long, lined with tomb chambers that contained the mummified bodies of more than 60 bulls, ranging in date from the 14th to the 2d century B.C. The second of these galleries was built by Psamtik I, a contemporary of Jeremiah, which fact indicates the exalted place the worship of Apis held at the time of the prophecy.

The probability that Apis was here in the prophet's mind is strengthened by the fact that the Heb. *'abbir*, "valiant one," also means "bull" and is so translated in Ps. 22:12; 50:13; 68:30; Isa. 34:7. As in the days of Moses the Egyptian gods were revealed in their true light (see on Ex. 8:2; 10:21), so now dramatizing the defeat of the Egyptians, Jeremiah seems to be pointing to the helplessness of the great bull gods.

16. *Let us go.* These are evidently the words of the mercenary troops, Greeks, various African tribes, peoples from Asia Minor, commonly employed in the Egyptian armies of this period. Lacking an innate loyalty to Egypt, they were ready to desert when they realized themselves defeated.

17. *Cry there.* A slight change in vowel pointing permits the translation, “Call the name of Pharaoh, king of Egypt, ‘Noisy one ...’” (RSV).

Pharaoh. An Egyptian royal title rather than the proper name of the king (see on Gen. 12:15). It is not clear which ruler is here referred to. The LXX identifies him as Necho, but this translation is clearly interpretative.

He hath passed the time appointed. Or, “he has let the appointed time pass by.” The scarcity of historical information regarding the war that Jeremiah here describes (see on v. 13) makes it impossible to know whether or not this statement refers to some slackness on the part of Pharaoh in joining battle with the Babylonians when it might have been to his advantage.

There may be a reference here to the passing of the day of opportunity for the Egyptian nation. Every nation has been permitted to occupy its place to determine whether it will fulfill the divine purpose. When a nation fails, its glory departs (PK 535; see on Dan. 4:17).

19. *Noph.* See on ch. 2:16.

20. *Destruction.* Heb. *qereṣ*, a word appearing only here in the Bible. Its root meaning, “to pinch,” “to nip,” suggests that *qereṣ* may refer to a biting insect that stings the heifer of Egypt into flight. The RSV reads, “a gadfly from the north has come upon her.”

North. See on ch. 1:14.

21. *Hired men.* This is a further reference to the mercenaries who played a prominent role in the Egyptian army during this period (see on vs. 9, 16).

Visitation. From the Heb. *paqad*, meaning basically, “to visit,” but used frequently in the sense of visiting with punishment (see Ex. 20:5; Job 35:15; Ps. 59:5; Isa. 26:14; Jer. 14:10). “Time of their visitation,” “year of their visitation,” are favorite expressions with Jeremiah (see chs. 8:12; 10:15; 11:23; 23:12; 48:44; 50:27; 51:18). However, *paqad* may also mean to visit with a divine blessing (see Gen. 21:1; Ps. 80:14). Jehovah’s day of visitation upon Egypt was not only a punishment but also a call to rectitude of action and repentance of heart (see Jer. 46:28).

22. *Like a serpent.* That is, the sound of the Egyptian army in retreat is not like the tread of well-ordered troops, but resembles rather a furtive attempt to glide away quietly before the oncoming Babylonians, who “march with an army.”

23. *Forest.* Here probably used figuratively for the multitude of the soldiers in the Egyptian army, or to represent the density of the population. It can hardly be taken literally, as there were no forests in Egypt.

24. *North.* See on ch. 1:14.

25. *The Lord of hosts.* See on ch. 7:3.

Multitude of No. Heb. *’Amon minno*, literally, “Amon from No.” The Egyptian city called Thebes (the modern Luxor and Karnak), about 310 mi. (c. 468 km.) south of Cairo, on the Nile. Amen was originally the local god of Thebes; hence the city came to be

known in Egyptian also as *Niut 'Imen*, “the city of Amen.” The Biblical “No” is a Hebrew transliteration of the first part of the Egyptian name for the city.

With the beginning of the Middle Kingdom in Egypt (about 2000 B.C.) and the establishment of the capital city at Thebes, the local god Amen quickly rose to supremacy among the deities of Egypt. To him were given the attributes of the sun god *Ra'*, and the two deities were identified as one under the name *Amen-Ra'*. The importance of Amen is illustrated by the prominence of the names Amenemhet, which was borne by four kings of the Middle Kingdom, and Amenhotep, the name of four other kings of the Imperial period. Several other Pharaohs, such as Tutankhamen also bore names compounded from Amen. During the Twenty-first Dynasty (c. 1085–c. 950 B.C.) the high priests of Amen actually ruled as kings of Egypt, and in Jeremiah's time the high priestesses of Amen were royal princesses. Probably the greatest evidence of the pre-eminence of *Amen-Ra'* is his temple at Karnak, part of ancient Thebes, which, though in ruins, still remains one of the greatest surviving architectural monuments of the ancient world.

By promising punishment on Amen and on Pharaoh, the Lord symbolized the coming of His wrath upon the entire religious and political systems of Egypt.

26. *It shall be inhabited.* This verse reveals the true purpose of God's judgments upon Egypt. The visitations were not intended to destroy her utterly, but to bring her, by humiliation, to repentance.

27. *Fear not thou.* The terrible picture of defeat for Egypt portrayed in this chapter ends with a message of hope for Israel. Divine judgments upon Israel's neighbors, as well as those upon herself, were intended to bring about her return to God.

CHAPTER 47

The destruction of the Philistines.

1. *Word of the Lord.* See on ch. 46:1. The Philistines had persecuted God's people; now they were to receive a just retribution.

Philistines. People called Philistines were in Palestine as early as the time of Abraham (see on Gen. 21:32; Joshua 13:2), but they came in force in the great migration of Sea Peoples about 1200 B.C. (see on Gen. 10:14; also Vol. II, pp. 27, 33, 34, 47). They were among the principal opponents of the early Hebrews, but after the time of David they played a much less important role in the affairs of Israel.

Pharaoh smote Gaza. Historical information is too meager to identify this attack positively. There are several periods when such an assault by the Egyptians was possible. It could have occurred during the troubled period between Necho's accession (610) and the early years of Nebuchadnezzar (604 or a little later), during which the Egyptians repeatedly marched up the coast to fight the Babylonians; or it may have been at the time of Apries' invasion in 587, during the siege of Jerusalem. The only instance during Jeremiah's lifetime of an Egyptian attack on Gaza of which there is historical record is that mentioned by Herodotus as being carried out by Necho II after a victory at “Magdolus,” the Greek form of Migdol, which means “fortress.” Its location is unknown. As Herodotus (ii. 159) says: Necho, having come to an engagement with the Syrians on land at Magdolus, conquered them, and after the battle took “the great Syrian city of Cadytis.” “Syria” here includes Palestine, and “Cadytis” is generally taken to be Gaza.

If this is the correct setting of the prophecy, it is to be dated in 609 B.C. or slightly later. If, on the other hand, Herodotus' reference is not to Gaza, then it must be admitted that there is no direct evidence as to when this attack took place.

In Biblical times Gaza was the most important trading center in Palestine. It lay at the southern end of the fertile Philistine Plain, at the convergence of two of the chief highways of Palestine. Here the trade route from the eastern desert—with its wealth of iron and copper from the mines of Edom—joined the great *Derek hay-yam*, or “Way of the Sea,” the coastal highway running north from Egypt. Because of its position on this latter route the city was of great strategic importance. The Egyptians had used this road for almost 1,000 years as the usual route of their repeated invasions into Palestine and Syria. During the Eighteenth and Nineteenth dynasties, when the Egyptians dominated much of Palestine, Gaza was one of their chief administrative centers. In taking Gaza, any Pharaoh who invaded Palestine would thus secure a point from which to dominate the coast line, protect his communications with Egypt, and control much of the commerce of the country.

The fact that this message was given “*before* that Pharaoh smote Gaza” indicates that it was a predictive prophecy, a warning to the Philistines of impending doom. Compare Jonah's message to Nineveh (Jonah 3).

2. *Out of the north.* If the Egyptian attack on Gaza was carried out by Necho on his return from Carchemish in 609 B.C. (see on v. 1), or soon after the battle at Megiddo earlier the same year, his approach to the Philistine Plain would have been from the north.

Some have understood vs. 1, 2 as referring to the domination of Palestine by the Babylonians, more serious and longer-lasting than the Egyptian inroads under either Necho or Apries. Verses 2–7 would then refer to the Babylonian invasions. According to this view v. 1 would point to the fact that before even the Egyptians attacked Gaza, the Lord had already warned the Philistines of the greater judgments to come upon them at the hands of the Babylonians.

4. *Tyrus and Zidon.* Tyre and Sidon dominated the coast north of the Philistine Plain and were evidently allied with the Philistines.

Country of Caphtor. Literally, “island of Caphtor,” that is, Crete, from which the Philistines had earlier migrated to the mainland (see on Gen. 10:14; also see Vol. II, pp. 33, 34).

Baldness. Perhaps a reference to a destruction of the city, a destruction so complete that the site would be left a bald hill, or *tell* (see on Joshua 11:13). The prophet may also have had in mind the thought of baldness as a sign of mourning, particularly in connection with his question, “How long wilt thou cut thyself?” Shaving the head and inflicting wounds upon the body were common expressions of grief (see Jer. 16:6; cf. Deut. 14:1).

Ashkelon. A leading Philistine city, about 12 mi. north of Gaza on the coastal road.

Valley. Heb. *‘emeq*, better, “a plain,” here the Philistine Plain.

6. *How long?* The prophet asks a rhetorical question to emphasize his statement in v. 7 that God has appointed these judgments on the Philistines.

CHAPTER 48

1 *The judgment of Moab, 7 for their pride, 11 for their security, 14 for their carnal confidence, 26 and for their contempt of God and his people. 47 The restoration of Moab.*

1. Moab. This country occupied the tableland to the east of the Dead Sea. Its people were related to the Hebrews, being descended from Lot, the nephew of Abraham (Gen. 19:36, 37). When Israel settled in Canaan, the territory of Moab lay between the river Arnon and the brook Zered. The tribe of Reuben occupied the country to the north. David included Moab in his empire (2 Sam. 8:2, 11, 12; 1 Chron. 18:2, 11). The northern kingdom of Israel attempted to maintain a measure of control over it (see on 2 Kings 1:1). At the end of Ahab's reign, when Ahaziah ascended the throne, a certain Mesha revolted against Israel and established Moab as an independent kingdom (2 Kings 3:4–27), including in his territories that which had previously been held by the tribe of Reuben. He recorded his conquests on a slab of black basalt, today known as the Moabite Stone. This inscription was discovered in 1868 at Dibon, and is now in the Louvre at Paris (see Additional Note on 2 Kings 3). Moab continued as an independent kingdom until the Westland was overwhelmed by the Assyrians in the 8th century B.C.

Chapter 48 lists a number of Moabite cities to come under the scourge of the Babylonians. Of the 25 places named, 21 can be reasonably identified. All but four of these places were within the territories north of the Arnon which were assigned to Israel at the time of the settlement of Canaan, and which were taken from her upon the revolt of Moab in the 9th century B.C. In fact, Mesha lists 11 of the places mentioned in this chapter as among those he took from Israel. He claims, furthermore, to have added 100 towns to his land (see Additional Note on 2 Kings 3). Thus Jeremiah seems particularly to describe God's judgments upon those Moabites living in the former territory of the tribe of Reuben.

Nebo. Not to be confused with the Babylonian god (Isa. 46:1), or Mt. Nebo (Deut. 32:49). Here Nebo designates a city, as in Num. 32:38, probably lying near Mt. Nebo, east of the northern end of the Dead Sea. On the Moabite Stone, Mesha mentions taking this city from Israel (see Additional Note on 2 Kings 3).

Kiriathaim. A place about 7 mi. (11.2 km. north of the river Arnon, now known as *el-Qereiyât*. Mesha refers to it under the name Qiryathan, and claims to have built it (see Additional Note on 2 Kings 3).

Misgab. The site of Misgab is unknown. The Hebrew word appears in Isa. 25:12, translated by the KJV as "high fort."

Heshbon. A city 15 1/4 mi. (24.4 km.) east-northeast of the north end of the Dead Sea. It had been in the territory of Reuben, taken from Sihon the Amorite when Israel entered Canaan (see Num. 32:33, 37). But Jeremiah's Heshbon was no longer in Jewish hands. Excavation of *Tell Hesbân* has yielded remains from the time of Jeremiah and of the early monarchy, when it was renowned for its fishpools (S. of Sol. 7:4).

Devised. Heb. *chashab*. There is a wordplay here, the Hebrew for Heshbon being *Cheshbon*. This device is a good illustration of the strong poetic tone that runs through the prophecy. Verse 2 seems to indicate that in Jeremiah's time Heshbon was the center of a plot against the Moabites.

Madmen. The site is uncertain, though it may be the modern *Khirbet Dimneh*, about 9 1/2 mi. (15.2 km.) east of the tongue that extends into the Dead Sea on its eastern side.

3. Horonaim. The site of this place is unknown. It is the Hauronen that Mesha states he took from Israel at the command of Chemosh (see Additional Note on 2 Kings 3).

5. Going up of Luhith. Or, “ascent of Luhith.” Doubtless a road, but the location is not known. It may have led through one of the many wadies, or deep narrow river beds, that cut through the highlands of Moab and lead down to the Dead Sea.

Horonaim. See on v. 3.

6. Heath. Heb. ‘aro‘er, from the root ‘arar, “to strip oneself.” The reference here is probably to the juniper, or tamarisk, tree, which in its stripped appearance was a fitting symbol for the desolation of the Moabite refugees. There is a subtle wordplay here that cannot be translated. The Hebrew word rendered “heath” is also the name of Aroer, one of the cities of Moab (see v. 19). The LXX reads “wild ass,” as if from the Heb. ‘arod, instead of ‘aro‘er. This reading has been adopted by the RSV. The figure of a wandering wild ass is indeed a fitting one for homeless refugees in the wilderness. However, the almost identical Hebrew word ‘ar‘ar in ch. 17:6 is rendered “wild tamarisk” by the LXX and “shrub” in the RSV, so that it appears safest to retain the reading of the Hebrew text.

7. Into captivity. The picture is that of the idols of captive peoples being carried into exile with their devotees (see Isa. 46:1, 2).

8. Valley. “The valley” and “the plain” refer to the two chief geographical features of Moabite territory, the eastern side of the Jordan valley, facing the Dead Sea, and the great plateau of Transjordan, rising nearly 4,000 feet above the valley and extending to the Arabian Desert.

10. Cursed. The pronouncement of a curse upon any whom God has chosen as His avengers who might hold back from delivering His appointed judgments, is a poetic way of emphasizing the inevitability of the predicted events.

11. Settled on his lees. Jeremiah compares Moab to wine that has never been drawn off into another container, and has thus absorbed the quality of its lees, or dregs. Although their country had suffered varied political fortunes, the fact that the Moabites had never suffered deportation to a foreign land (they had “not been emptied from vessel to vessel”) may have tended to keep them from absorbing fresh views of the world and new outlooks on life. Thus their provincialism grew into a national self-content that resulted in their downfall.

12. Wanderers. Heb. šo‘im, “tilters,” that is, those who tilt vessels in order to pour out their contents.

13. Ashamed of Chemosh. A vivid contrast with the boastful declarations of Mesha (see the inscription on the Moabite Stone, translated in the Additional Note on 2 Kings 3).

Ashamed of Beth-el. A reference to the idolatrous worship in the form of a calf, established by Jeroboam at Bethel, and continued generally throughout the history of the northern kingdom (see 1 Kings 12:26–29). As Israel found her idols powerless, so now Moab would find hers.

18. Daughter that dost inhabit Dibon. That is, the inhabitants of Dibon. Compare the expressions “daughter of Egypt” (ch. 46:11), “daughter of Judah” (Lam. 1:15), “daughter of Zion” (Lam. 2:10). Dibon, the modern *Dhibân*, was an important city in the southern part of the territory formerly occupied by Reuben, 3¼ mi. (5.2 km.) north of the Arnon

and 12 mi. (19.2 km.) east of the Dead Sea. It lay on the great *Derek ham-melek*, or King's Highway (the "high way" of Deut. 2:27), which in ancient times was the main thoroughfare running north and south through Transjordan. Dibon was a campsite of the Israelites on their way into Canaan (see Num. 33:45, 46), was later rebuilt by the tribe of Gad (Num. 32:34), and was afterward included in the territories of Reuben. On the Moabite Stone, Mesha records that Dibon was among those cities he took from Israel and added to the kingdom of Moab (see Additional Note on 2 Kings 3).

19. Aroer. Either a town now called *'Arâ'ir*, 3 1/8 mi. (5 km.) southeast of Dibon and mentioned as captured from Israel by Mesha (see Additional Note on 2 Kings 3), or an unidentified site near Rabbah (Joshua 13:25); but not the Aroer of 1 Sam. 30:28.

Way. Heb. *derek*. Probably a reference to the King's Highway (see on v. 18), upon which Aroer was situated. This thoroughfare was the natural route for Moabite refugees to take when fleeing the approaching Babylonians from the north. Here Jeremiah ironically calls upon the people of Aroer to go forth and behold their fellow countrymen fleeing southward along the highway before the invaders.

20. In Arnon. Or, "by the Arnon" (RSV). The Arnon was the most important river of Moab. It ran west from the plateau into the Dead Sea and marked the southern boundary of the tribe of Reuben when Israel held that territory.

21. Plain country. See on v. 8.

Holon. Possibly a place near Medeba, though the exact site is unknown.

Jahazah. Though to be either the modern *Jālûl* or *Khirbet et-Teim*, near Medeba in what was formerly northern Reuben. It was here that Israel overthrew Sihon, king of the Amorites (see Num. 21:23, 24). The Moabite Stone refers to it as Jahaz and says it was the headquarters of the Israelite king during the war with Mesha. The Moabite boasts that his god, Chemosh, drove the Israelites from Jahaz (see Additional Note on 2 Kings 3).

Mephaath. Possibly the modern *Tell ej-Jâwah*, about 7 mi. (11.2 km.) south of Rabbath-ammon.

22. Dibon. See on v. 18.

Nebo. See on v. 1.

Beth-diblathaim. It is not certain whether this is identical with Almon-diblathaim, where Israel camped before entering Canaan (Num. 33:46). The latter is thought to be the modern *Khirbet Deleilât esh-Sherqîyeh* in what was formerly central Reuben. Beth-diblathaim appears as *Beth-diblathen* on the Moabite Stone, where Mesha claims to have built it (see Additional Note on 2 Kings 3). *Khirbet Deleilât esh-Sherqîyeh* is about 7 mi. (11.2 km.) south of Medeba.

23. Kiriathaim. See on v. 1.

Beth-gamul. The modern *Khirbet ej-Jumeil*, about 7 mi. (11.2 km.) east-southeast of Dibon, in what was formerly southern Reuben.

Beth-meon. This is now known as *Ma'în*, about 4 1/2 mi. (7.2 km.) southwest of Medeba. It is identical with Baal-meon, which the people of Reuben built (see Num. 32:37, 38), and also Beth-baal-meon (in Joshua 13:15–21). Mesha refers to it in the Moabite Stone by both of these latter names and says that he built (meaning rebuilt) the

city (see Additional Note on 2 Kings 3). The extent of its present-day ruins indicates that it must have been a place of importance. Ezekiel classes it with two other cities as “the glory of the country” of Moab (Eze. 25:9). A possible reason for the variety of its names is suggested by the statement that the people of Reuben changed its name (see Num. 32:38). Evidently the change was from the heathen Baal-meon, literally, “Baal of habitation,” to Beth-meon, literally, “house of habitation.” Thereafter the old name and the new seem sometimes to have been fused into Beth-baal-meon, literally, “house of the Baal of habitation.”

24. Kerioth. This place has not been identified. It is mentioned on the Moabite Stone as the town to which Mesha brought Orel, the Israelite commander of Ataroth, “dragging him before Kemosh in Kerioth” (see Additional Note on 2 Kings 3).

Bozrah. Probably the town of *Beşer* mentioned as rebuilt by Mesha (see Additional Note on 2 Kings 3). The location is unknown. The city is to be distinguished from the Bozrah of Isa. 63:1 and Jer. 49:13, which was in Edom.

25. Horn. A symbol of strength. See on Lam. 2:3.

27. Found among thieves. To be detected as a thief is presented as a reason for great shame (see ch. 2:26). Here the prophet employs the same thought as a rhetorical question, presumably to emphasize the unreasonableness of Moab’s having despised Israel.

30. I know. This clause is emphatically expressed in the Hebrew. It is a powerful reassurance to downtrodden, despised Israel that the Lord knows the truth in spite of men’s pride and boasting, which Israel has heard (v. 29).

31. Kir-heres. Believed to be the same as the Kir-haraseth of 2 Kings 3:25 and the Kir-hareseth of Isa. 16:7, the modern *el-Kerak* in southern Moab. After referring to cities that had previously belonged to Israel, Jeremiah mentions a place in Moab proper. Kir-heres was one of the most important cities of Moab. Here Mesha took refuge from Israelite besiegers, and sacrificed his eldest son as a burnt offering upon the walls of the city (see 2 Kings 3:25–27).

32. Sibmah. A place near Heshbon, but the exact site is unknown. The locality was noted for its vineyards.

Jazer. The location is uncertain, but is believed to have been west or northwest of Rabbath-ammon. It may be mentioned here to point out how far north the Moabite conquests had penetrated into Israel.

33. Shouting. The joyous shouting at the time of harvest, when the grapes were trodden in the wine press.

34. Elealeh. The modern *el-‘Al*, near Heshbon.

Jahaz. See on v. 21.

Zoar. A place in southern Moab, either near the shore, or now covered by the southeastern end of the Dead Sea.

Horonaim. See on v. 3.

Waters also of Nimrim. The *Wādī en-Numeirah*, a watercourse leading into the southeastern end of the Dead Sea. The prophet pictures a cry of anguish ringing back and forth through both the northern and the southern part of Moabite territory, thus including the whole land (see Isa. 15:6).

35. High places. Heb. *bamah*. This term was originally used for a hill or mountain upon which worship was conducted. Later the word was used for artificial mounds, or platforms, and finally also for chapels where the gods were worshiped. A *bamah* discovered at Gezer revealed a series of subterranean caves, in which were found an altar and the bones of men, women, and children, and of various animals. Solomon erected a *bamah* to the Moabite god Chemosh near Jerusalem (see 1 Kings 11:7). The kings of Israel built *bamoth* in all their cities (see 2 Kings 17:9). These shrines were common also in Judah (see 1 Kings 22:43; 2 Kings 15:35; 16:4). They were destroyed in Judah by both Hezekiah (see 2 Kings 18:4) and Josiah (see 2 Kings 23:5). In the reform under Josiah, Jeremiah played a leading role.

36. Pipes. Heb. *chalilim*, literally, “the pierced ones.” These instruments were double flutes or oboes. The pipes were played in pairs, with the ends held apart, each hand fingering a separate pipe and thus producing separate tones. They were used particularly for rejoicing and mourning. It is the latter use to which Jeremiah doubtless has reference here. For a further description of these instruments see Vol. III, pp. 38, 39.

37. Every head. Shaving the head and beard and making gashes upon the body were common signs of mourning among ancient peoples (see Isa. 15:2, 3; Jer. 16:6).

40. As an eagle. A reference to the Babylonians (cf. Eze. 17:3–7).

41. Kerioth. See on v. 24.

42. Shall be destroyed. With the Babylonian exile, the Moabites practically disappeared as a people.

43. Fear, and the pit, and the snare. Heb. *pachad wapachath wapach*, a striking example of alliteration, demonstrating the poetic nature of Jeremiah’s utterance (see Lam. 3:47).

44. Visitation. See on ch. 46:21.

45. Heshbon. See on v. 2.

Sihon. Compare Num. 21:28. Sihon, king of the Amorites, had taken from Moab the territory north of the river Arnon which was occupied by Reuben (see on Judges 11:19) and later reconquered by Moab (see on 2 Kings 3:5; see also Vol. II, pp. 864, 865). That area is here referred to by Sihon’s name.

Tumultuous ones. Literally, “sons of tumult.” A reference to the Moabites (see Amos 2:2).

46. Chemosh. The god of the Moabites (see v. 7).

47. Bring again. A promise of hope, doubtless conditional (ch. 18:9, 10).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

10 TM 274; 1T 222; 7T 175

11 TM 255; 8T 150

CHAPTER 49

1 *The judgment of the Ammonites.* 6 *Their restoration.* 7 *The judgment of Edom,* 23 *of Damascus,* 28 *of Kedar,* 30 *of Hazor,* 34 *and of Elam.* 39 *The restoration of Elam.*

1. Ammonites. Literally, “the sons of Ammon.” Like the Moabites, this nation was descended from Lot (see Gen. 19:38), the nephew of Abraham, and was thus related to Israel. When the Israelites entered Canaan, the Ammonites were in possession of the highlands of Transjordan east of the northern part of the Amorite kingdom of Sihon. The

tribe of Gad became neighbor to the Ammonites when it took over Sihon's northern territories. The Ammonites seem to have been of a particularly bitter disposition toward Israel. David (1 Chron. 19; 20:1–3), Jehoshaphat (2 Chron. 20:1–25), and Jotham (2 Chron. 27:5, 6) all warred against them. The Ammonites carried on a devious policy in Jeremiah's time. Though at first allies of Babylon against Judah (see 2 Kings 24:2), they later attempted to enlist Judah in a league against Babylon (see on Jer. 27:3). When the destruction of Jerusalem came they expressed great satisfaction (see Eze. 25:1–7). They later plotted the murder of Gedaliah (see Jer. 40:14).

Their king. Heb. *malkam*, the consonants of which may stand for *milkom* (see 1 Kings 11:5, 33) and thus represent the name of the Ammonite deity. The LXX reads *Melchom* (thus supporting the reference to the Ammonite god, Milcom). Inasmuch as in Jer. 48 Jeremiah repeatedly mentions the Moabite god Chemosh (vs. 7, 13, 46), it seems reasonable to understand here the name of the Ammonites' national deity. The name of this god has been attested in Ammonite inscriptions found at archeological sites.

Inherit Gad. When the people of Gad had been exiled by Tiglath-pileser III of Assyria (see 1 Chron. 5:26) in the latter half of the 8th century B.C., the Ammonites evidently came and took possession of their land.

2. Rabbah. The Ammonite capital, Rabbath-ammon, now '*Ammân*, capital of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. The site is 23 mi. (36.8 km.) east of the Jordan River in a straight line.

3. Heshbon. See on ch. 48:2. The Moabite city is called upon to lament what has already happened to Ai, perhaps because it forebodes her doom also.

Ai. This is the only reference to an Ai in Transjordan. The town was probably near Heshbon.

Hedges. Heb. *gederoth*, a word used elsewhere of sheepfolds (see Num. 32:16, 36; 1 Sam. 24:3; Zeph. 2:6), which were fenced enclosures in the open fields. Jeremiah's thought here is evidently that the people of Ammon will forsake their conquered cities and seek refuge in the open country in these corrals.

Their king. Or, Milcom (see on v. 1).

4. Valleys. The streams of Transjordan flow through deep valleys, called wadies, which often remain green when the rest of the country becomes dry. Rabbah is called "the city of waters" (see 2 Sam. 12:27).

5. Lord God of hosts. See on ch. 7:3.

6. Bring again. See on ch. 48:47.

7. Edom. The land of the Edomites, known also as "mount Seir" (see Gen. 36:8), lay south of Moab, extending from the brook Zered southward toward the Gulf of Aqabah. It included the country on both sides of the Arabah, the great geological fault that continues the rift of the Jordan valley, south of the Dead Sea. The country to the east of the Arabah is characterized by colorful limestone formations. Though it is semidesert and sparsely populated today, there is ample archeological evidence that Edom in Biblical times supported an extensive population. It was important for two reasons: first, it contained valuable copper and iron deposits (cf. Deut. 8:9), which its rulers exploited; and second, it controlled the trade route from the desert to western Palestine and the Mediterranean, as well as the great King's Highway running north into Syria.

The people of Edom were more closely related to the Israelites than were either the Moabites or the Ammonites; they were descended from Esau, “who is Edom” (Gen. 36:1). For this reason Israel was commanded to show them special consideration (see Deut. 23:7). Although relations between the two nations appear at first to have been reasonably friendly (see Deut. 2:4–6, 29), they later deteriorated into bitter animosity. The Edomites took particular delight in the fact that Jerusalem was destroyed by the Babylonians (see Ps. 137:7).

Jeremiah’s prophecy against Edom closely parallels that of Obadiah. Several passages are so strikingly similar (Jer. 49:7; cf. Obadiah 8; Jer. 49:9, 10a; cf. Obadiah 5, 6; Jer. 49:14–16; cf. Obadiah 1–4) that it appears that one writer quoted the other. However, it is impossible to determine which represents the original and which a quotation, or whether, indeed, the two prophets may have collaborated on these passages and then each included them in his own utterance.

Teman. Either one of the tribal districts of Edom, taking its name from Teman, the grandson of Esau (see Gen. 36:15), or as a poetic synonym for Edom.

8. Dwell deep. That is, “dwell in the depths” (RSV), in inaccessible and hidden places of refuge. The stone formations so characteristic of the country afforded caves and recesses for hiding.

Dedan. A tribe descended from Abraham and Keturah (see Gen. 25:3). They were distinguished as merchants (see Eze. 27:15, 20; 38:13).

Calamity of Esau. Doubtless the calamities destined to fall upon Edom.

Visit. See on ch. 46:21.

9. Leave some. The thought is that grape gatherers generally leave gleanings, and thieves normally destroy only until they have enough, but the coming judgments would do a thorough work.

10. Seed. That is, children or descendants.

11. Fatherless children. In the midst of a picture of utter destruction the prophet calls upon those who survive the terrors of war to place their faith in Jehovah. Divine judgments are not without the positive purpose of bringing men back to Him.

12. Drink of the cup. See Jer. 25:15; cf. Jer. 13:12–14; Rev. 14:10).

13. Sworn by myself. Compare Heb. 6:13.

Bozrah. Usually identified with *Buseirah*, about 24 mi. (38.4 km.) south by east from the Dead Sea. It is evidently a different city from that mentioned in ch. 48:24.

16. Rock. Heb. *sela’*. Jeremiah’s reference here is probably to the site of Sela (later known as Petra, “rock”), 51 mi. (81.6 km.) south of the Dead Sea. This was a virtually impregnable mountain fortress in a natural amphitheater. It was accessible only through a narrow gorge, the *Sîq*, which winds for 1 1/4 mi. (2 km.) between precipitous walls 100 to 160 ft. (30.5 to 48.8 m.) high.

17. Desolation. Compare the prophecy against Jerusalem, ch. 19:8. See on v. 7 for a description of Edom.

19. He shall come. Verses 19–21 are virtually identical with ch. 50:44–46, where the same words are applied to Babylon.

Swelling of Jordan. Heb. *ge’on hayyarden*, “the majesty of Jordan” (translated “the pride of Jordan” in Zech. 11:3). Some believe that Jeremiah refers to the swelling waters of the Jordan at flood season. Yet inasmuch as the phrase seems to denote a lair of lions,

it seems more reasonable to understand this expression to apply to the rank growth of willows, tamarisks, and cane that lines the river's banks (see on Jer. 12:5).

Who is like me? The exact meaning of the latter part of v. 19 is not clear. It appears that God here represents Himself as directing all that befalls Edom. This in itself should be a comfort even to those who are punished, for they may know that a divine hand directs their destiny.

20. Teman. See on v. 7.

Draw them out. The clause reads literally, "they shall drag them away, the little ones of the flock." The rabbis understood this to mean that "the little ones of the flock shall drag them away," and cited the later conquest of the Westland by the Persians, who in Jeremiah's time were a very insignificant people. However, a more probable interpretation regards the phrase "little ones" as the object of the verb, and translates the passage, "Even the little ones of the flock shall be dragged away." The reference is then to the complete captivity to come upon the people of Edom. Such a translation forms a better parallel with the final clause of the verse.

21. Red sea. The Hebrew here is dramatic, reading literally, "A cry—at the Red Sea is heard its noise." The southern boundary of Edom, at its greatest prosperity, extended to the Gulf of Aqabah, the northeast tip of the Red Sea (see 1 Kings 9:26). The cry of anguish reaches to the farthest extent of the ravaged country.

22. Bozrah. See on v. 13.

23. Damascus. One of the most ancient of continuously inhabited places of importance in the Near East (see Gen. 14:15). The town was situated on a wide plateau east of the Anti-Lebanon range, in a fertile oasis formed by the Pharpar and Abana rivers. It was conquered by David (see 2 Sam. 8:5, 6) and again by Jeroboam II (see 2 Kings 14:28). However, during most of the period of the divided kingdom, Damascus was capital of one of the chief Aramaean states. It finally lost its independence to Tiglath-pileser III of Assyria in 733/732 B.C. For a considerable period thereafter it seems to have been comparatively insignificant politically. Aside from Jeremiah's statement in Jer. 49:23–27, there is no other Biblical mention of Damascus during the period of the Exile, except the entirely incidental references in Eze. 27:18; 47:16–18; 48:1. Yet Damascus remained a highly important commercial center. It was situated at the junction of two leading trade routes, (1) the Way of the Sea, which ran north from Egypt along the Mediterranean coast, and thence across northern Palestine by way of Megiddo and the Sea of Galilee, and (2) the King's Highway, which carried the desert trade from Arabia and Edom north through Transjordan. These roads met at Damascus and thence ran across the desert into Mesopotamia. Thus the Aramaeans became the great inland commercial nation of the Near East, as the Phoenicians became the sea traders.

Hamath. A city on the Orontes River 118 mi. (188.8 km.) north by east from Damascus; the modern *Ḥamā*. The name appears in the Assyrian inscriptions as *Amâtту* and *Ḥammâtu*.

Arpad. The modern *Tell Erfâd*, a city about 95 mi. (152 km.) north of Hamath and 19 mi. (30.4 km.) north by west from Aleppo. The name appears in Assyrian texts as *Arpadda*. Hamath and Arpad are frequently mentioned together (see 2 Kings 18:34; 19:13; Isa. 10:9; 36:19).

27. Ben-hadad. Compare Amos 1:4. Ben-hadad is literally, “son of Hadad.” Hadad was an Aramaean god. Benhadad was a characteristic name of the kings of Damascus (see 1 Kings 15:18; 20:1; 2 Kings 13:3; see on 1 Kings 15:18). Here it seems to be used as a general reference to the Syrian kings.

28. Kedar. These people were descendants of Ishmael (see Gen. 25:13) and thus, like the Moabites, Ammonites, and Edomites mentioned in Jer. 48; 49, were related to Israel. They were apparently noted as archers (Isa. 21:16, 17). It is clear from Jer. 49:29 that they led a nomadic, pastoral existence. According to 27:21, their homeland was Arabia. This is also clear from the reference to them here as “the men of the east,” Heb. *bene-qedem*, “sons of the east,” also translated, “children of the east,” a frequent term for the dwellers in the Arabian Desert (see on Judges 6:3; 1 Kings 4:30; cf. Judges 7:12; 8:10; Job 1:3; Eze. 25:4, 10).

Hazor. The OT mentions several places by this name (Joshua 11:1; 15:23, 25; Neh. 11:33). All of these, however, appear to have been west of the Jordan, whereas the Hazor mentioned here is clearly east of Palestine. It has been suggested that the name Hazor, Heb. *chaṣor*, may be derived from the Heb. *chaṣer*, “an unwalled town,” “a village.” The word “villages” in the phrase “the villages that Kedar doth inhabit” (Isa. 42:11) is from *chaṣer*. Thus there may be a general reference here to those Arabs living in villages as contrasted with their nomadic neighbors who are indicated by the name Kedar.

31. Arise. Spoken by the Lord to the invading Babylonians.

Wealthy. Heb. *shelew*, “undisturbed,” “carefree.” The people of Arabia are represented as living a free, nomadic life without the fortifications customary among more settled peoples.

32. The utmost corners. See on ch. 9:26.

33. Dragons. Heb. *tannim*, “howling ones,” probably jackals. These animals are repeatedly referred to in Scripture in connection with desolate cities (see Isa. 13:22; Jer. 9:11; 10:22; 51:37). The translation “dragons” seems to have arisen through confusing *tannim* with *tannin*, “a serpent” (Ex. 7:9, 12), or “dragon” (Isa. 27:1; 51:9; etc.).

A desolation for ever. The absence of any trace of this Hazor (see on v. 28) bears out the truth of this prediction.

34. Elam. This was the country occupying the highlands to the east of Babylonia, an area now in the western portion of modern Iran. Elam lost its independence to the Assyrians under Ashurbanipal (669–c. 627 B.C.), and was subsequently swallowed up in the revived Babylonian Empire of the time of Nebuchadnezzar.

Beginning of the reign. This prophecy was given soon after the deportation of Jews to Babylon in 597 B.C., when Nebuchadnezzar took Jehoiachin, the royal family, and many soldiers and artisans into exile. Thereafter the Babylonian king placed Zedekiah, Jehoiachin’s uncle, on the throne. A prophecy regarding Elam was particularly significant to the Jews at a time when many were exiles in Babylon and thus in closer contact with the Elamites than ever before.

This prophecy was delivered at a crucial time in Jeremiah’s personal career. It is contemporary with his message against the foreign ambassadors sent to Zedekiah (see ch. 27; see on ch. 27:3).

There is insufficient information to trace historically the fulfillment of all the details of this prediction. As with Edom (see on Obadiah 15, 17), certain features may have been related to the future glory of Israel, and hence to that extent conditional.

35. *The bow.* The Elamites were famed for their archery (see Isa. 22:6).

38. *Set my throne.* A figure indicating that God would superintend the affairs of Elam (see Ps. 103:19; Jer. 43:10).

39. *Bring again.* See on ch. 48:47.

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11 MH 202

CHAPTER 50

1, 9, 21, 35 *The judgment of Babylon.* 4, 17, 33 *The redemption of Israel.*

1. *Word that the Lord.* See on ch. 46:1.

Many of the expressions of chs. 50; 51 descriptive of the desolation of literal Babylon appear again in Rev. 16 to 19 in John's delineation of the fall of mystical Babylon (see on Isa. 47:1). A careful study of these expressions in their historical setting can prove of aid in clarifying the meaning of the same expressions in their setting in the book of Revelation. Note the following:

Jeremiah 50; 51

1. "There cometh up a nation against her" (50:3). "Cause to come up against Babylon an assembly of great nations" (50:9; cf. v. 3).

2. "Make her land desolate" (50:3).

3. "Go forth out of the land of the Chaldeans" (50:8). "My people, go ye out of the midst of her, and deliver every man his soul" (51:45; cf. v. 6).

4. "Destroys of mine heritage" (50:11).

5. "Not be inhabited" (50:13). "It shall be no more inhabited forever" (50:39).

6. "Every one that goeth by Babylon shall be astonished" (50:13). "At the noise of the taking of Babylon the earth is moved, and the cry is heard among the nations" (50:46). "Howl for her" (51:8).

7. "Her plagues" (50:13).

8. "The vengeance of the Lord" (50:15). "The time of the Lord's vengeance" (51:6).

9. "As she hath done, do unto her" (50:15).

Revelation 16 to 19

1. "The kings of the earth . . . gather . . . to the battle of that great day of God Almighty" (16:14). "The ten horns . . . are ten kings. . . These shall hate the whore" (17:12, 16).

2. Make her desolate and naked (17:16).

3. "Come out of her, my people" (18:4).

4. "I saw the women drunken with the blood of the saints" (17:6; cf. 18:24).

5. "The voice of harpers [etc.] . . . shall be heard no more at all in thee" (18:22).

6. "The kings of the earth . . . shall bewail her, and lament for her" (18:9; cf. vs. 10, 11, 15-19).

7. "Her plagues" (18:4).

8. "God hath avenged you on her" (18:20). "Great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath" (16:19). "Strong is the Lord God who judgeth her" (18:8). "He hath judged the great whore" (19:2).

9. "Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works" (18:6).

“Recompense her according to her work; according to all that she hath done, do unto her” (50:29). “Render unto her a recompence” (51:6).

10. “I will kindle a fire in his cities” (50:32). “A burnt mountain” (51:25).

11. “They [her waters] shall be dried up” (50:38). “I will dr up her sea” (51:36). “Dweldest upon many waters” (51:13).

12. “Be not cutt off in her iniquity” (51:6).

13. “Babylon . . . made all the earth drunken: the nations have drunken of her wine; therefore the nations are mad” (51:7).

14. “Babylon is suddenly fallen and destroyed” (51:8).

15. “Her judgment reacheth unto heaven” (51:9).

16. “Abundant in treasures” (51:13).

17. “Thine end is come” (51:13).

“Not rise from the evil that I will bring upon her” (51:64).

18. “He [the Lord] uttereth his voice (51:14, 16).

19. “The sea is come up upon Babylon: she is covered with the multitude of the waves thereof” (51:42).

“Bind a stone to it, and cast it ino he midst of Euphrates. . . . Thus shall Babylon sink” (51:63, 64).

10. “Burn her with fire” (17:16). “She shall be utterly burned with fire” (18:8). “The smoke of her burning” (18:9).

11. “The water thereof [the great river Euphrates] was dried up” (16:12).

12. “That ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues” (18:4).

13. “The inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication” (17:2). “All nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication” (18:3; cf. 14:8).

14. “In one hour is thy judgment come” (18:10). “In one hour is she made desolate” (18:19).

15. “Her sins have reached unto heaven” (18:5; cf. v. 2).

16. “So great riches” (18:17; cf. vs. 7, 14, 15, 19).

17. “Shall be found no more at all” (18:21; cf. vs. 22, 23).

18. “There came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done” (16:17). “God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will . . . the words of God shall be fulfilled” (17:17).

19. “A great millstone . . . cast . . . into the sea, . . . Thus . . . shall that great city Babylon be thrown down” (18:21).

See also on Isa. 13; 14; 47:1; Jer. 25:12; cf. Eze. 26:13.

Babylon. Jeremiah’s prophecy against Babylon is the longest (chs. 50:1–51:58) of his utterances against the foreign nations surrounding Israel. Babylon was at this time the dominant power in the Near East, and was the chief adversary of the people of Judah. The other nations had from time to time molested Judah, but Babylon conquered and destroyed her. This prophecy is evidently to be dated in the 4th year of Zedekiah (see ch. 51:59, 60), 594/593 B.C., autumn to autumn.

Some have wondered that Jeremiah, whose policy it was to urge cooperation with Babylon (ch. 27:12–18), should at such a crucial time as this deliver so strong a pronouncement against that country. The answer seems to lie in the fact that this prophecy was not given for the benefit of the Jews at Jerusalem, to whom Jeremiah directed his urgent messages of faithfulness to Babylon, but was intended, rather, for the

Israelites who were exiles in Babylon (see chs. 50:4–8, 17–20; 51:60–64). If the message reached the Babylonians, it was to them a warning that Jehovah would still bring judgment and destruction upon them for their failure to cooperate fully with Heaven's plan. To the Jewish exiles it was an assurance that God had not forgotten their plight, and that there would be a day of restoration for them.

2. *Bel ... Merodach.* The Babylonian *bêlu*, “lord” (related to Heb. *ba'al*), a title applied to the chief god of Babylon, Marduk (the “Merodach” of this verse). Jeremiah repeatedly represented the punishments visited upon surrounding nations as judgments upon their false gods (see chs. 46:25; 48:7, 13, 46; see on ch. 49:1).

Babylonian mythology concerning Marduk in some respects resembles the Bible narrative. The Babylonian creation story, *Enûma elish*, recounts that before the creation of the world there was a great war in heaven, in which Marduk, the king of the gods, conquered and killed Ti'āmat, the primeval mother-goddess of watery chaos. Then he made heaven and earth from her body, and afterward created man to serve the gods, making him from the blood of another deity. In view of these distorted similarities to Jehovah's struggle with Lucifer in regard to the creation of man, Jeremiah's prophecy that “Merodach is broken in pieces” becomes of particular significance.

3. *The north.* In 539 B.C. the Persians and Medes conquered the Babylonian kingdom. Media lay north of Babylonia.

5. *A perpetual covenant.* It was God's purpose that the discipline of the exiles should lead to genuine repentance and that the remnant of Israel should, upon their return, fulfill the destiny God had planned for the descendants of Abraham (see pp. 29, 30).

6. *Shepherds.* Both the religious and the political leaders of Israel caused the people to stray. When the religious leaders of the nation lost their spiritual power, the rulers quickly descended morally.

From mountain to hill. The prophet may have in mind here the fact that idolatrous worship was frequently practiced on hilltops. At least the figure portrays the forlorn condition of Israel spiritually, wandering as shepherdless sheep among the mountains, restless, but not remembering their true fold. Augustine of Hippo referred to the condition of the human heart thus: “Thou hast formed us for Thyself, and our hearts are restless till they find rest in Thee.” (*Confessions* i. 1).

7. *Habitation of justice.* Or, “habitation of righteousness.” This is a rich and striking expression as used here of Jehovah. The term “habitation,” Heb. *naweh*, continues the pastoral theme of v. 6. *Naweh* is elsewhere used of an abiding place of shepherds (ch. 33:12) and of their flocks (chs. 23:3; 49:20). God is declared to be not only the true abode of lost Israel but also the source of righteousness.

8. *Remove.* For the picture of the people of God escaping from spiritual Babylon see on Rev. 18:4.

He goats. The picture is that of he-goats pressing ahead to lead the flock.

9. *An assembly of great nations.* These nations are enumerated in ch. 51:27, 28.

12. *Hindermost.* Babylon took pride in her world leadership. At a time when the nation was ascending to the pinnacle of her power (see on v. 1) Jeremiah in biting irony prophetically calls her “the hindermost of the nations.” Compare Balaam's prophecy of Amalek (Num. 24:20).

A desert. By prophetic foresight Jeremiah looks down through the centuries and beholds the result of a succession of catastrophes that would cause Babylon to become “a wilderness, a dry land, and a desert.” The soil of Babylonia was highly fertile. When irrigated, the land yielded abundant crops, but when left without water, it quickly became a vast desert. From early times the prosperity of central and southern Mesopotamia depended upon the existence of a strong government that could maintain the network of irrigation canals. Periods of anarchy were periods of desolation. As the prophet predicts political disaster, he also sees the country becoming a desert.

The predicted desolation came, although not immediately upon Babylon’s fall. Under the Persians the country of Babylonia continued to be highly productive. Herodotus (i. 193), writing during that period, declared, “For the Babylonian territory, like Egypt, is intersected by canals. . . . It is so fruitful in the produce of corn, that it yields continually two hundred-fold, and when it produces its best, it yields even three hundred-fold. The blades of wheat and barley grow there to full four fingers in breadth, and though I well know to what a height millet and sesame grow, I shall not mention it; for I am well assured that, to those who have never been in the Babylonian country, what has been said concerning its productions will appear to many incredible. . . . They have palm-trees growing all over the plain” (Henry Cary, trans.).

A similar situation prevailed in Roman times; Pliny (*Natural History* xviii. 17), in the 1st century A.D., states that there were two harvests a year in Babylonia. Mesopotamia continued to flourish under Moslem rule until 1258, when the Mongols, under the grandson of Genghis Khan, swept over Western Asia. As part of their depredations they demolished the irrigation system. Since that time, the central and southern plains of Mesopotamia have been largely desert.

13. Not be inhabited. Whereas v. 12 seems to apply to the country as a whole, this verse apparently refers specifically to the city. Babylon was not destroyed by Cyrus, and its decline came by slow stages (see on Isa. 13:19). For many centuries the most imposing of the remains of ancient Babylon, the great mound that contains the ruins of the royal palace-fortress and the adjacent Gate of Ishtar, have been a mass of crumbling brick. No one can look upon this scene of broken walls and general desolation without realizing how completely Jeremiah’s predictions have been fulfilled.

15. Given her hand. That is, surrendered.

17. Assyria. A reference to the destruction of the northern kingdom of Israel by the Assyrian king, Shalmaneser V, in 723/722 B.C. (2 Kings 18:9–12).

18. As I have punished. Nineveh, the capital of Assyria, was destroyed by the Babylonians and Medes in 612 B.C. Within less than ten years thereafter the remnants of the empire disappeared, and soon the Assyrians as a nation were lost to history. Their fall is graphically described in the prophecy of Nahum. The kingdom of Babylon was soon to lose its independence at the hands of the Persians (539 B.C.), and in the reign of Xerxes it similarly ceased to be even a subordinate kingdom, and was merged with Assyria into a province. The city of Babylon was largely destroyed, though it continued to exist for some time after that (see on Isa. 13:19).

19. Carmel. The areas mentioned here suggest that God planned to restore the original limits of Israel. Carmel is literally, “garden land.” Bashan, Ephraim, and Gilead were noted for their fertility, forests, and herds of cattle (see Deut. 32:14; Judges 8:2; Isa.

35:2; Hosea 9:13; Micah 7:14; Zech. 11:2). These promises were conditional on obedience (see PK 704).

20. *Shall be none.* The forgiveness of sin here promised would have followed sincere repentance and a genuine spiritual revival. The sins that characterized Israel prior to the Exile were not to be repeated. Israel failed to fulfill the divine purpose.

Whom I reserve. Literally, “whom I shall cause to remain.” This text is an assurance of pardon to God’s remnant people; the RSV reads, “for I will pardon those whom I leave as a remnant.” The Jews who were left at the end of the Captivity were here given the promise that if they were repentant God would no longer hold against them the evil deeds of their past history.

21. *Merathaim.* A Hebrew dual form, probably from the Heb. *marah*, “to be rebellious,” and thus meaning “double rebellion.” The name may be used to emphasize the gravity of the rebellion of the Babylonians against Jehovah. The Babylonians had had ample opportunity to know and to serve the true God through the witness of the Jewish captives in their midst. The use of this name for Babylon may also be a play on words.

Marrâtîm was the Babylonian name for a lagoon in southern Babylonia at the head of the Persian Gulf.

Pekod. Literally, “visitation,” here doubtless in the sense of punishment (see on ch. 46:21). Like *Merathaim*, it appears to be a play on a Babylonian term, probably in this case on *Puquûdu*, the name of an Aramaean tribe in southeastern Babylonia. These people are mentioned in Eze. 23:23 as being in the Babylonian army.

23. *Hammer.* The power that once had shattered other nations is now itself broken (see Isa. 14:4–6).

24. *Wast not aware.* Babylon was taken by surprise by the Persians (see on Dan. 5:30, 31).

25. *Lord God of hosts.* See on ch. 7:3.

27. *Bullocks.* Possibly a reference to the warriors or princes of Babylon (see Ps. 22:12; 68:30; Isa. 37:7).

28. *Voice.* Those Jews who were eye-witnesses of the invasion and downfall of Babylonia could bear a striking testimony in Jerusalem to the magnitude of the punishment of the nation that had destroyed the Temple.

29. *Let none.* The picture is of a typical siege of an ancient city. Thus the Babylonians had overthrown the strongholds of their neighboring nations. The same tactics are now employed against them.

30. *Her young men.* Compare ch. 49:26, where the same prediction is made concerning the city of Damascus.

34. *Redeemer.* Heb. *go’el*. This word appears more than 40 times in the OT, although Jeremiah uses it only here. It is variously translated by the KJV as “redeemer,” “kinsman,” “revenger,” “avenger.” It is the term applied to the near relative whose duty it was to avenge a murder (see Num. 35:19), and to buy back land sold by a poor man (see Lev. 25:23–25; cf. Ruth 3:9; see on Ruth 2:20). The Lord is here presented as Israel’s kinsman, who will both avenge her persecutors and restore her to her rightful inheritance.

Lord of hosts. See on ch. 7:3.

Thoroughly plead their cause. The Hebrew is highly poetic, reading literally, “pleading he will plead their plea.”

35. A sword. Verses 35–38 are a poetic unit, as is shown by the repetition of the phrase “a sword is upon.” In consonantal Hebrew the phrase translated “a drought is upon” (v. 38) is identical with that translated “a sword is upon.” The Syriac gives the same translation throughout.

Wise men. Babylon was famous for her wise men, upon whom the kings depended for guidance (see Dan. 2:2, 12; Dan. 5:15).

36. Liars. Heb. *baddim*, “empty talkers.” The reference is probably to the so-called wise men of Babylon (see Isa. 44:25).

37. Mingled people. Probably a reference to foreign troops in the Babylonian army.

Treasures. The Babylonians had robbed the treasures of Judah (see Jer. 52:17–23; Dan. 1:2).

38. Waters. The prosperity of Babylonia depended upon her two great rivers, the Tigris and the Euphrates (see on vs. 12, 35).

Mad upon their idols. Or, “with horrible things they act like mad men.” The prophet probably has in mind orgies performed in the presence of grotesque, and often obscene, idols.

39. Wild beasts. The phrase “the wild beasts of the desert with the wild beasts of the islands” is the translation of the Heb. *ṣīyyim ’eth–’īyyim*. The sound of this passage when read in Hebrew suggests the shrill cries of wild animals as they prowl in the ruins of Babylon. *Ṣīyyim* is variously derived by scholars from a Hebrew root meaning “dryness,” in which case it could indicate a desert animal (as KJV), or from another root meaning “to cry,” suggesting an animal that yelps. *’īyyim*, taken by the translators of the KJV to be a form of *’i* “island,” is considered by recent authorities to be from a root meaning “to cry,” and to refer to the jackal.

Owls. Heb. *benoth ya’anah*, probably literally, “daughters of the desert,” or “daughters of the hard, stony land.” The term denotes ostriches (see on Lev. 11:16).

No more inhabited. See on v. 13.

41. North. See on chs. 1:14; 50:3.

Coasts of the earth. Or, “the remotest parts of the earth” (see ch. 51:27, 28). When the Medes and Persians overthrew Babylon in 539 B.C., their empire in its northern and eastern reaches extended beyond the limits of any previous world power. The Persian Empire, as finally constituted, reached from the border of India on the east to Thrace and Egypt on the west, south into Arabia and north into modern Turkistan and the Caucasus. This was by far the greatest empire the world had yet known.

43. Hands waxed feeble. See Dan. 5:6, where Belshazzar’s conduct at the time of the fall of Babylon is described. Nabonidus, with whom Belshazzar shared the rule, seems likewise to have presented no strong resistance to the invaders. The Babylonian historian Berosus states that Nabonidus advanced against the Persians but was defeated in battle, whereupon he fled, and later surrendered without attempting to defend himself (see Josephus *Against Apion* i. 20). The so-called Nabonidus Chronicle, the cuneiform document which constitutes a primary source on the fall of Babylon to the Persians, reflects the same picture of disorganization and only half-hearted defense on the part of Nabonidus. It states: “In the month of Tashritu, when Cyrus attacked the army of Akkad in Opis on the Tigris, the inhabitants of Akkad revolted, but he (*Nabonidus*) massacred

the confused inhabitants. The 14th day, Sippar was seized without battle. Nabonidus fled. The 16th day, Gobryas (*Ugbaru*), the governor of Gutium and the army of Cyrus entered Babylon without battle. Afterwards Nabonidus was arrested in Babylon when he returned (there)” (*Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, J. B. Pritchard, ed., p. 306).

44. Behold. Verses 44–46 are almost identical with ch. 49:19–21, where the words are applied to Edom (see comments there).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

20 COL 205; GC 485

23–25PK 532

25 PP 509

33, 34 PK 532

C H A P T E R 51

1 *The severe judgment of God against Babylon in revenge of Israel. 59 Jeremiah delivereth the book of this prophecy to Seraiah, to be cast into Euphrates, in token of the perpetual sinking of Babylon.*

1. Midst of them. Heb. *leb qamay*, “the heart [or midst] of those who rise up against me,” a fitting description of the Babylonians in their rebellion against the Lord. This expression has added significance in that it appears to be an ancient Jewish cipher of the type known as atbash, a device in which the last letter of the Hebrew alphabet was substituted for the first, the next to the last for the second, and so on. By this scheme the consonants of the expression *leb qamay* become *Kasdim*, the Hebrew form for Chaldeans. Thus the RSV translates, “against the inhabitants of Chaldea.” For other examples of the cipher see on chs. 25:25, 26; 51:41.

Destroying wind. Or, “the spirit of a destroyer” (RSV). However, in view of the mention of “fanners” (v. 2) the context seems to suggest that the translation of the KJV is to be preferred.

2. Fanners. Or, “winnowers.” The picture is that of the Oriental method of separating the wheat from the chaff after the tramping of oxen had threshed the grain. The mixture of grain and chaff was thrown into the air; the grain, being heavier, fell to the ground, while the wind carried the chaff away. So the Babylonians were to be scattered by the “destroying wind” of the Persians.

3. Him that bendeth. The Hebrew of this verse is obscure, and has been variously translated. It is difficult to determine what Jeremiah had in mind by this statement. The passage may possibly be understood to indicate the ease with which the Babylonians were eventually overcome. It appeared that the enemies needed scarcely to arm themselves for the battle. A recent translation of the so-called Cyrus Cylinder (see Vol. III, illustration facing p. 64), a pro-Persian account in cuneiform of the capture of Babylon, describes the Medo-Persian army advancing on the city: “His [Cyrus] widespread troops ... strolled along, their weapons packed away. Without any battle, he [Marduk, god of Babylon] made him enter his town Babylon” (*Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, J. B. Pritchard, ed., p. 315). See further on ch. 50:43.

Brigandine. That is, armor.

5. Forsaken. Heb. *'alman*, probably meaning “widowed,” since *'almanah*, its feminine form, means “widow.” This verse is a reassuring contrast to Lam. 1:1 (cf. Isa. 50:1, 2; 54:4–10).

Though. Heb. *ki*, a conjunction that can have several meanings. Some translators prefer the more common meaning of *ki*, “for” (Jewish Publication Society), or “but” (RSV), in which case “their land” must be understood as referring to that of the Chaldeans (v. 4). Taken in this sense the passage contrasts the sins and the punishment of the Babylonians with the restoration that God purposes to bring to His people. However, the translation of the KJV with the idea of concession is a possible one. It brings to mind the fact that God’s salvation of Israel, and indeed of all men, is in spite of their sins, provided only that they are willing to accept salvation.

Holy One of Israel. See on Isa. 1:4.

6. Flee. In the book of Revelation the great Antichristian power is described under the figure of ancient Babylon (see Rev. 17; 18; see on Isa. 13:4; Jer. 50:1). Compare especially Rev. 18:4.

7. Cup. Compare ch. 25:15–29, where the various nations are asked to drink of the wine of the wrath of God, indicative of their destruction by the rising Babylonian Empire. That power in turn must now drink of the same cup. Under the figure of ancient Babylon, John the revelator describes the intoxicating power and final fall of spiritual Babylon (Rev. 14:8, 10; 16:19–21; 17; 18).

9. Healed Babylon. By the Captivity God purposed not only to bring Israel to repentance but also to acquaint with the true religion the Babylonians and other nations whom the Jews would meet in their exile. Through such men as Daniel and Ezekiel, the Babylonians were given the opportunity to know and to follow Jehovah. Their failure to do this was a contributing factor in their downfall.

Reacheth unto heaven. Compare Rev. 18:5.

11. Medes. The question may be raised as to why both Isaiah (Isa. 13:17) and Jeremiah name the Medes as the conquerors of Babylon, when historical sources point to the conquest as having been accomplished by a coalition of Medes and Persians, in which the latter were the dominant power. The answer may lie in the fact that in Isaiah’s time the Medes were already known as a people, though scarcely a united nation, and that by Jeremiah’s time they constituted a powerful empire to the north and west of Babylon, whereas in the days of neither of these prophets would a reference to the Persians have been very meaningful to the readers. For the earlier history of the Medes and Persians, see on Dan. 2:39; also Vol. III, pp. 50–52. It was not until 553 or 550 B.C., 40 years or more after the giving of Jeremiah’s prophecy, that Cyrus II, vassal king of Anshan under Media, and later king of Persia, asserted his independence and launched forth on a series of conquests that before his death saw the establishment of the Persian Empire, the greatest that to that time had existed. Thus in Jeremiah’s time the Medes still loomed larger in the consciousness of the neighboring peoples, and the term Medes was used to refer to the united peoples of Media and Persia in the time of Daniel (see on Dan. 6:8).

Temple. The Babylonians concretely demonstrated their rejection of Yahweh by their destruction of the Temple at Jerusalem. Consequently they were to suffer “the vengeance of the Lord.”

13. Many waters. See on Jer. 50:12, 38; cf. Rev. 17:1; see on Jer. 51:6.

14. Sworn by himself. Compare ch. 49:13.

Men. The invading armies that overthrew Babylon.

15. He hath made. Verses 15–19 are almost identical with ch. 10:12–16 (see comments there).

17. Founder. Heb. *şoreph*, “one who refines,” “a goldsmith.”

18. Their visitation. See on ch. 46:21.

19. Portion. The wicked inherit their portion, or share, in this life (see Ps. 17:14), but the Lord Himself, who has formed all things, is the inheritance of His people (see Ps. 119:57; 142:5).

20. Battle axe. Heb. *mappeş*, “an instrument of shattering.” The reference is probably to a war club or mace. Commentators have debated to whom vs. 20–23 are addressed. The best conclusion seems to be that God is here speaking to Babylon, and describing the various ways by which the Babylonians would bring judgments upon the nations.

23. Captains. From the Heb. *pachah*. This word is derived from the Assyrian *paḥātu*, and denotes a provincial governor, or satrap (see Neh. 2:7; Esther 3:12; Haggai 1:1).

Rulers. From the Heb. *sagan*. This word is derived from the Assyrian *shakenu*, and denotes a lesser official, a prefect (see Neh. 2:16).

24. Render. The fact that the depredations of the Babylonians had been used by God to punish evil and to bring His people to repentance in no way lessened the responsibility of the Babylonians for their wicked deeds (see AA 581). Every man is held responsible for his own evil choices. Though God may overrule an evil deed for a beneficial end (Ps. 76:10), this in no way makes Him responsible for the sin. God often makes the devices of the enemy serve purposes of mercy (see DA 471).

In your sight. This verse is addressed to the Jews.

25. Destroying mountain. The reference is plainly to Babylon, but inasmuch as the city was situated in completely flat country, the expression must be understood figuratively of her great dominating power. Daniel uses a similar figure for God’s kingdom (Dan. 2:34, 35, 44, 45; cf. Rev. 17:9, 10).

26. A stone for a corner. This verse must not be taken literally in the sense that the building materials of the ruined city of Babylon would never be used again for construction purposes. Much of it was taken to build Seleucia, and some has been used in medieval and modern times by Arabs in the construction of several villages, which are now within the outer limits of ancient Babylon. The verse is to be understood rather as a figurative statement that the ancient Babylonian Empire would never be re-established, and that the city would end in ruins and never be restored to its former glory and importance (see on ch. 50:12).

27. Ararat. This refers to the kingdom known in Assyrian inscriptions as Urartu, located in eastern Armenia to the northwest of Lake Van. In 2 Kings 19:37 and Isa. 37:38, where the Hebrew reads literally, “land of Ararat,” the KJV, following the LXX, translates the expression “the land of Armenia.” Cyaxares (c. 625–585 B.C.) incorporated Urartu into the Median Empire.

Minni. In Assyrian inscriptions, *Mannai*, a people living south and southeast of Lake Urmiah. They are also known as Manneans and Munna.

Ashchenaz. The *Ashkuza*, a people living southeast of Lake Urmiah (see on Gen. 10:3). Scholars identify them with the Scythians, a rapacious people of uncertain origin who swept into Mesopotamia from central Asia in the 7th century B.C. Herodotus (i. 95 ff.) states that for 28 years (653–625 B.C.) they dominated and plundered Media (see George C. Cameron, *History of Early Iran*, pp. 176, 232). Then Cyaxares, the Median king, conquered them and they became his allies. It seems to have been from the Scythians that the Medes learned prowess with the bow, for which they became renowned (see Jer. 51:11). The Scythians were allied with the Medes and the Babylonians in the destruction of the Assyrian Empire at the end of the 7th century, and appear in v. 27 again as a Median ally in the destruction of Babylonia.

Captain. Heb. *ṭiphsar*, probably from the Assyrian *ṭupsharru*, “a tablet writer,” “a scribe.” Throughout the ancient Near East the “scribe” implied much more than merely one skilled in the art of writing. Scribes held positions of relatively great importance, and the term here used signifies a military officer of high rank.

28. Medes. See on v. 11.

Captains ... rulers. See on v. 23.

30. Forborn to fight. Both the cuneiform records of the fall of Babylon and the Biblical account indicate that the Babylonians made no determined effort to withstand the Medo-Persian conquest. The cuneiform account, as contained in the so-called Nabonidus Chronicle, records only one real battle, that at Opis, between the Tigris and the Euphrates, a site identified with the later Seleucia (*Tell Umair*). Another cuneiform document, known as the Cyrus Cylinder (see Vol. III, illustration facing p. 64), declares that “without any battle, he [Marduk, the god of Babylon] made him [Cyrus] enter his town Babylon” (*Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, J. B. Pritchard, ed., p. 315). There is some indication also that Cyrus, who led the attack, may have had contact with the priests of Marduk within the city, who thoroughly disliked the reigning king, Nabonidus. In this case treachery may have played a definite part in the fall of the city.

The Biblical narrative depicts the king, Belshazzar, at a drunken feast the night the city was taken (Dan. 5; see on Jer. 50:43).

Their holds. That is, their strongholds. The city of Babylon was extraordinarily well fortified. Excavations have shown that there was an extensive double outer wall, possibly with a rubble fill between, all with a total base width of 96 ft. (about 29 m.); also around the Inner City a double wall and a moat formed by water from the river. Also within the latter wall was the royal citadel, further fortified (see p. 796).

The Greek historians Herodotus (i. 190, 191) and Xenophon (*Cyropaedia* vii. 5. 1–36) both state that when attacked by the Medes and Persians, the Babylonians took refuge within their walls, thinking themselves able to withstand a protracted siege.

They have burned. That is, the invading armies have burned.

31. One post. Verses 31, 32 portray the confusion among the servants of the king when they realize that the attackers have gained access to their supposedly impregnable city.

32. Passages are stopped. Rather, “the passageways are seized.” The word translated “passages” is rendered “fords” in Joshua 2:7; Judges 3:28. Herodotus and Xenophon (see references under “their holds,” Jer. 51:30) state that the attackers gained entrance by

diverting the water of the river, which flowed through the city, sufficiently to allow troops to enter by way of the river bed.

33. Harvest. The harvest of Babylon was reaped by her enemies when they despoiled her (see Isa. 17:5; cf. Joel 3:13).

34. Dragon. Heb. *tannin*. There may be an allusion here to the Babylonian *sirrush*, an imaginary, composite dragonlike creature sacred to the god Marduk. Hundreds of reliefs of this animal in glazed bricks adorned the great Ishtar Gate at Babylon (see on v. 58).

Cast me out. Either from the Heb. *nadach*, “to thrust away,” or from the Heb. *duach*, “to rinse.” Either definition makes good sense.

36. Sea. Heb. *yam*, sometimes used in reference to rivers (see Isa. 19:5; Nahum 3:8, where *yam* is used of the Nile). That such is the thought of the prophet here seems evident from the fact that Babylonia was characterized by its system of rivers and canals (see on Jer. 50:12, 38).

Jeremiah’s reference here may be to the diverting of the waters of the Euphrates, by which means the Medo-Persian troops gained entrance to Babylon (see on v. 32). It is an interesting fact also, though perhaps not the intent of this prophecy, that the Euphrates River, which in ancient times flowed through the heart of the city and made it a great center of commerce, now follows a new course some distance to the west of the ruins of Babylon. The piers of the famous bridge that once spanned the river in the center of the city are now lying in dry ground. See Babylon and Environs.

37. Shall become heaps. See on ch. 50:13.

Dragons. Heb. *tannim*, “jackals” (see on ch. 49:33).

39. In their heat. Possibly referring to the fact that when Babylon fell, the leaders of the nation were inflamed with reveling and carousing (see Dan. 5). Herodotus (i. 191) states that “by reason of its [the city’s] great extent, when they who were at the extremities were taken, those of the Babylonians who inhabited the centre knew nothing of the capture (for it happened to be a festival); but they were dancing at the time, and enjoying themselves, till they received certain information of the truth. And thus Babylon was taken” (Henry Cary, trans.).

Rejoice. The prophet portrays the irony of the drunken Babylonians’ exaltation on the very eve of their destruction.

Perpetual. Heb. *‘olam*, a word denoting duration either for eternity or for limited periods of time (see on Ex. 21:6). While in their drunken stupor the Babylonians would be slain and thus sleep the “perpetual sleep” of death. The phrase “not awake” means that they would not wake as does the drunken man after the effects of his intoxication have worn off. Inasmuch as all the wicked are raised at the end of the millennium (Rev. 20:5), it is necessary to assign to the *‘olam* of Jer. 51:39 the meaning of limited duration.

40. Lambs. The lambs, rams, and he-goats probably designate the various classes in the population of Babylon, the “he goats” representing the leaders (see Isa. 34:6; Eze. 39:18).

41. Sheshach. This name is believed by some to be another cipher (see on v. 1; ch. 25:26).

42. The sea. A strikingly similar statement is found in a cuneiform inscription on a clay barrel known as the Cyrus Cylinder (see Vol. III, illustration facing p. 64). This pro-

Persian account of the conquest of Babylon depicts Cyrus' army on its march to Babylon: "His widespread troops—their number, like that of the water of a river, could not be established—strolled along, their weapons packed away" (*Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, J. B. Pritchard, ed., p. 315).

43. Desolation. See on ch. 50:12, 13.

44. Bel. See on ch. 50:2.

That which he hath swallowed up. That is, the nations and spoils that had been gathered into Babylon. When the Persians took over the rule, they allowed the return of captive peoples and their idols. In the inscription just quoted (v. 42), Cyrus states: "(As to the region) from ... as far as Ashur and Susa, Agade, Eshnunna, the towns Zamban, Me-Turnu, Der as well as the region of the Gutians, I returned to (these) sacred cities on the other side of the Tigris, the sanctuaries of which have been ruins for a long time, the images which (used) to live therein and established for them permanent sanctuaries. I (also) gathered all their (former) inhabitants and returned (to them) their habitations. Furthermore I resettled upon the command of Marduk, the great lord, all the gods of Sumer and Akkad whom Nabonidus has brought into Babylon ... to the anger of the lord of the gods, unharmed in their (former) chapels, the places which make them happy" (*Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, J. B. Pritchard, ed., p. 316).

Wall. See ch. 50:15.

46. Ruler against ruler. There is evidence that not long after Jeremiah's time, from the death of Nebuchadnezzar onward, there was considerable unrest, both internal and external, before the fall of the Babylonian Empire. Verse 46 reflects the state of fearful anticipation that must have been felt by many of the Babylonians as they saw their own government torn by strife at a time when a vigorous new power was arising to world leadership and domination (see Vol. III, pp. 46–49). Throughout history it has been the common people who have suffered most severely from the intrigues and wars of evil rulers. God's people are encouraged neither to faint nor fear in the face of such calamities.

47. Graven images. See on v. 52.

48. Shall sing. Compare Isa. 44:23, where nature is poetically called upon to rejoice over Israel's redemption.

North. See on ch. 1:14. Although Cyrus, the Persian conqueror, actually came originally from western Iran, he approached Babylon commanding the armies of the former vast Median Empire, to the north of Mesopotamia. Many of the various peoples who composed his army (see v. 27) were from northern nations.

49. The slain of Israel. The Hebrew of this verse allows of several different translations, depending upon how the clauses are understood to be related to each other. Besides the KJV rendering, the ASV marginal reading is possible: "Both Babylon is to fall, O ye slain of Israel, and at Babylon shall fall the slain of all the land." The translation of the RSV, "Babylon must fall for the slain of Israel, as for Babylon have fallen the slain of all the earth," depends upon the conjectural insertion of the preposition "for" in front of the word translated "slain."

50. Remember. Jeremiah's message emphasizes that uppermost in the mind of the Jews must be the thought of return to Palestine as soon as opportunity afforded. The importance of this injunction is seen in the fact that many years later, when Cyrus and his successors did allow those Jews who desired to return to do so, only a fraction of the

nation responded to the call. Although in Jeremiah's day the exiles were longing for their homeland, within two or three generations, toward the close of the 70 years decreed by God for their captivity (ch. 29:10), they had settled in Babylon; and experiencing reasonable prosperity, the majority refused to return to the rocky hills of Palestine with its ruined cities and villages.

52. *Graven images.* The Babylonians had derided and despised the Jews because the Temple of the Lord was in ruins; now they will no longer be able to do this, for their idols will be destroyed.

53. *Mount up to heaven.* The reference is possibly to the exceedingly high walls of Babylon and to the great temple-tower that stood in the center of the city. Because only broken foundations remain today, it is impossible to calculate the height of the walls of Babylon as they stood at the zenith of its glory. Herodotus (i. 178) states that the city wall was 200 royal cubits (about 340 ft.) high. Although this is undoubtedly exaggeration (see Additional Note on Dan. 4), it does indicate that the wall must have reached an unusual height. The ziggurat, or temple tower of Babylon, according to a contemporary cuneiform inscription, rose some 300 ft. in the air.

55. *The great voice.* Possibly a reference to the din of Babylon's great population, or to the voice of authority with which Babylon spoke in her glory.

Her waves. Heb. *gallehem*, "their waves." This is probably not to be understood of the Babylonians, but of the attacking armies.

56. *Lord God of recompenses.* Literally, "a God of recompenses is Yahweh."

57. *Her princes.* The various classes of Babylonian officialdom are here listed (see on v. 23).

Perpetual sleep. See on v. 39.

58. *Broad walls.* See ch. 50:15; see on ch. 51:30, 53.

High gates. According to a cuneiform description of Babylon, the city boasted eight main gates, besides several smaller ones. Another cuneiform inscription of Nebuchadnezzar (the so-called East India House Inscription) states that the leaves of the gates were of cedar covered with copper (KJV "brass"). Among the most impressive of the remains discovered at Babylon are the ruins of the Ishtar Gate, in the northern wall, through which passes one of the main thoroughfares of the city. The enamel-glazed bricks of this gate were molded to form fine life-sized reliefs of bulls (sacred to the god Adad) and "sirrush" (mythological dragonlike monsters sacred to Marduk). These figures were white and yellow upon a blue background. Altogether the excavators estimated a minimum of 575 of these animal figures on this one gate.

Folk in the fire. The sense of this passage seems more clearly expressed by the RSV: "The peoples labor for nought, and the nations weary themselves only for fire." Compare Hab. 2:13.

59. *Son of Neriah.* Evidently Seraiah was a brother of Baruch, the scribe and helper of Jeremiah (see ch. 32:12). In placing his message in the hands of Seraiah, Jeremiah was doubtless committing it to a trusted and sympathetic friend.

Went with Zedekiah. In view of the unrest in the Westland which had threatened to break into active revolt against Babylon, it is not unreasonable to believe that Nebuchadnezzar had summoned his vassal to the capital to renew his oath of allegiance (see PK 447).

An intriguing possibility, though utterly without evidence, is that this visit to Babylon by the king of Judah may have been for the purpose of attending the dedication of Nebuchadnezzar's great image on the plain of Dura (see on Dan. 3:1). Such a suggestion, however, must remain in the realm of speculation only.

Fourth year. Namely, 594/593 B.C. This prophecy was given in the year of Jeremiah's controversy with the false prophet Hananiah (see ch. 28).

Quiet prince. Heb. *šar menuchah*, "prince of a resting place," possibly designating the quartermaster, the official in charge of arranging quarters for the king on his journey. Another suggestion, based on the idea that *menuchah* at times denotes the opposite of war (1 Kings 8:56; 1 Chron. 22:9), is that Seraiah may have been a leader of the peace party in Judah, and thus, in a sense favorable to the Babylonians.

60. In a book. Literally, "in one book." That this was not the only copy of the message against Babylon is plain from the fact that the record was not lost when the book was thrown into the Euphrates (v. 63). The prophet, or his secretary Baruch, probably made a copy on a separate scroll of the part of the prophecies pertaining to Babylon, and gave this to Seraiah when the opportunity of sending it to Babylon presented itself.

62. Desolate. For comment see on ch. 50:12, 13.

63. Cast it. Jeremiah frequently dramatized his prophecies (see chs. 13:1–11; 19:1–13; 27:2, 3; 43:9, 10).

64. Thus far. With this verse Jeremiah's prophecy ends. The final chapter is a historical epilogue (see on ch. 52:1).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

6 PK 715
8 PK 532
9 PK 530
13 Ed 176
14, 31, 32, 41 PK 531
41 PK 515, 522
56–58 PK 532
59 PK 447

CHAPTER 52

1 *Zedekiah rebelleth.* 4 *Jerusalem is besieged and taken.* 8 *Zedekiah's sons killed, and his own eyes put out.* 12 *Nebuzar-adan burneth and spoileth the city.* 24 *He carrieth away the captives.* 31 *Evil-merodach advanceth Jehoiachin.*

1. Zedekiah. Verses 1–27, 31–34 are almost identical with 2 Kings 24:18–25:21, 27–30 (see comments there). This chapter was probably added to show the complete historical fulfillment of Jeremiah's prophecies concerning the downfall of Judah. On the authorship of this chapter see p. 344.

One and twenty years old. At the time of the greatest crisis in her history, Judah had the misfortune of finding her leadership in the hands of a young, inexperienced, and vacillating king.

Hamutal. Zedekiah was a half brother of Jehoiakim (see 2 Kings 23:36), but a full brother of Jehoahaz (see 2 Kings 23:31), who years before had been taken from the throne by Necho II of Egypt, Nebuchadnezzar's great rival.

3. Anger of the Lord. This statement is not to be taken as meaning that Zedekiah's rebellion against Babylon was the work of an angry God who desired thereby to bring destruction upon Judah. The perfidy of the Jewish king was of his own choice.

Zedekiah rebelled. See on 2 Kings 24:20. The young and inexperienced Zedekiah faced problems that would have overwhelmed many a ruler of stancher character and greater sagacity than he. He was placed upon the throne, not by legal succession, but by a dominant foreign power that held the rightful king, with many of the national leaders, in exile. He was surrounded by nations eager to revolt against Babylon and likewise eager for his adherence to their cause. His counsels were torn by strife between the pro-Babylonian party encouraged by Jeremiah and a popular nationalism backed by false prophets. He was continually intrigued by the phantom hope that Egypt might rescue his country from Babylonian oppression.

4. Ninth year. The siege of Jerusalem probably began Jan. 15, 588 B.C. (see on ch. 39:1), and lasted till July 18, 586 B.C., a period of two years and a half. However, the city was not under attack continuously for the entire time. At some point during the campaign the army of Apries, king of Egypt (Pharaoh-hophra, ch. 44:30), advanced toward Palestine, whereupon the Babylonians temporarily withdrew (see ch. 37:5–11).

Against Jerusalem. The present siege differed from the previous invasions in that it was now Nebuchadnezzar's intention to destroy the nation. Past invasions of Judah had greatly diminished both the territory and the population of the country. One authority estimates that the number of people in the country had decreased by at least half to a pitiful total of perhaps 150,000 (W. F. Albright, *The Biblical Archaeologist*, IX:1 [February, 1946], p. 4). Now the Babylonians attacked "all the cities of Judah that were left," including Lachish and Azekah (see on ch. 34:7).

7. Broken up. That is, a breach was made in the wall. The context seems to indicate that resistance collapsed because of famine.

8. Jericho. Zedekiah may have fled in the direction of the Jordan valley with the intention of escaping into Transjordan, where the Moabites and Ammonites were located. Earlier in his reign these nations had sought Zedekiah's allegiance in a coalition against the Babylonians (see ch. 27:3).

11. Put out the eyes. Prisoners were commonly blinded by piercing the eyeballs with the point of a spear. Besides enduring the torture involved in the losing of his eyesight, Zedekiah suffered the mental anguish of having to remember throughout the rest of his life, as the last thing he ever beheld, the fearful sight of the execution of his sons.

12. Tenth day. That is, Aug. 17 or 18, 586 B.C. Two events are mentioned for this date: (1) Nebuzar-adan came into Jerusalem, and (2) he burned the Temple and many other buildings. According to 2 Kings 25:8, the parallel account, he arrived on the 7th of the month (Aug. 14 or 15, 586 B.C.). It is possible to harmonize these dates by assuming that the captain entered the city on the 7th and burned the Temple on the 10th. The possibility of a scribal error is less likely than the correctness of both dates. There would have had to be a considerable interval for removing the treasures from the city before the destruction. Another possibility is that the conflagration lasted for three days (see Vol. II, p. 98).

Nineteenth year. The change in dating introduced here, from a reckoning in terms of Zedekiah's reign to one according to Nebuchadnezzar's, is a tacit admission that the rulership had passed from the Judean to the Babylonian king. Modern scholars depend

upon similar changes in the date lines of ancient tablets and other documents for much of their information regarding the approximate dates on which new Mesopotamian kings began their reigns (see Vol. III pp. 86–87).

13. *Burned the house.* The destruction of the Temple and other public buildings was not a result of the siege, but a deliberate act of the Babylonians, carried out one month after the fall of the city.

14. *Brake down all the walls.* On vs. 14–23 see on 2 Kings 25:10–17.

22. *Five cubits.* The height of the capitals of the pillars is given in 2 Kings 25:17 as three, not five, cubits. Here again we have the possibility of a scribal error (see on Jer. 52:12), but it is equally possible that the figures represent different methods of measuring. Concerning the metal objects taken from the Temple, Jer. 52 gives several independent details not found in Kings. One writer may have excluded and the other included, as part of the capital, a decorative band below or a top segment above the carved network of pomegranates. Those who work constantly with data from reference books know how often an apparent error or discrepancy is found to be a mere difference in point of view.

24. *The chief priest.* Not only the political leaders, but the religious heads of the nation as well, were destroyed. Only a short time prior to this, Zephaniah, the second priest, had heard Jeremiah predict the death of Jerusalem's leaders (ch. 21:1, 7).

25. *Seven men.* 2 Kings 25:19 reads "five men." More information as to the classification of the captives might clarify the apparent discrepancy.

28. *The seventh year.* This verse presumably describes a summer campaign in 598 (see on Jer. 52:29), the year preceding the captivity of Jehoiachin, which was in the 8th year, 597 (2 Kings 24:12).

29. *The eighteenth year.* This was the year preceding the capture of Jerusalem (Jer. 52:12), presumably in the summer of 587. The customary campaigning season was the spring and summer (see on 2 Sam. 11:1; also Vol. II, p. 109n.). Some scholars have assumed that this 18th year is the time of the fall of the city, and that Jer. 52:12 supplies an erroneous date (see Vol. III, p. 93, n. 6), but there is no reason to assume a contradiction. Verse 30 records an additional captivity in the 23rd year, which is not mentioned elsewhere. Obviously, then, there is no reason to doubt that in the 7th and 18th years numbers of Jews were taken also. Inasmuch as annual campaigns were common at that time, captives were doubtless taken frequently and repeatedly. The capture of 832 persons in the 18th year must not, therefore, be equated with the major captivity of the 19th year.

The record of the various deportations does not state whether the figures given represent the number of those who began the journey into exile or of those who survived the rigorous trip and actually arrived in Babylon. According to the records of ancient history the usual result of such deportations was that the ultimate survivors represented only a fraction of those who began the forced march. Thus if the records of the number of captives refer to the ones who actually arrived in Babylon, we must believe that a great many more were initially made captives by Nebuchadnezzar, but died before they reached Babylon. On the other hand, if the numbers given refer to those who set out in chains (see ch. 40:4) into exile, how pitifully small must have been the various groups who arrived at Babylon.

31. Five and twentieth day. 2 Kings 25:27 has the 27th day. Here again we have an event that took place in several steps that may or may not have occurred on the same day (see on Jer. 52:12). Hence it is impossible to say whether these differing figures represent a scribal error or two valid dates chosen by different writers to record the same general event.

Lifted up the head. Approximately 561 B.C. (see Vol. II, p. 161). On vs. 31–33 see on 2 Kings 25:27–29.

34. Continual diet. Rations issued to Yaukin (Jehoiachin), king of Judah, and his sons are mentioned on Babylonian records of 592 B.C., only a few years after his exile began (see Vol. II, p. 97). He was evidently free at first, but was later placed in prison, where he remained presumably until Evil-Merodach freed him and assigned him a food allowance until his death.

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¹⁰Nichol, F. D. (1978). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary : The Holy Bible with exegetical and expository comment*. Commentary Reference Series (Je 39:3). Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association.